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EAST AND WEST SERIES

Nos. 92-94 Feb.-April, 1965

9/243

PRESENTED

FOUR MEN OF DESTINY

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EAST AND WEST SERIES

[Monthly]

An Interpreter of the Life of the Spirit

9/243

FOUR MEN OF DESTINY

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IMPORTANT

1. Kindly note that this is a special number for the three months, February, March and April, 1965.

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—The Manager

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MESSAGES AND BLESSINGS

In my journey towards the ultimate truth about what must always appear to be a mystery to the finite mind, I have left behind many once-popular schools of thought, including the present irrational cult of the material object, and have reached a point of view which might be called *eternalistic*. (We are forced to give names to things in order to communicate.) In any case, we are all ruled by the words we accept and put into action, and I have resolved to accept, as far as possible, *eternal* values.

It seems to me the most eternal of all values is Love expressed in kindness to your neighbour,—inside and out.

So, as an *eternalist*, I feel more and more attracted by the values taught by Dadaji and commemorated by you in the *East and West Series*.

Woodland Kahler Marquis de St. Innocent
President, International Vegetarian Union, England.

It has been a great pleasure to receive your magazine each month.

I think you are doing a great work with your publications, and I am sure the Lord is blessing it and enabling you to carry on, for the benefit of all those who derive inspiration and help from each issue.

Mrs. I. J. Henry
New York.

My heart is overwhelmed with joy with the reading of the "Series."

Mrs. M. Kondrat
U. S. A.

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INTRODUCTION

THIS number of the "Series" tells us of four men of destiny, —true men, who renounced everything in the service of the poor, accepting poverty and suffering as a discipline God used to purify them. Being purified, their hearts attained to illumination: and their illumined souls attained to realisation.

These four men were :—(1) Sri Chaitanya; (2) Sri Ramakrishna; (3) Mahatma Gandhi; and (4) Parushah.

These four men bore witness to the truth that the highest life is realised in self-abnegation, in self-donation to God. These four men attained to inner revolution by walking the simple way, the little way of humility and humble acceptance of what came to them as they walked the little way, trusting in God and always turning to Him for strength and solace in loneliness.

All these four truly great ones grew in the consciousness that suffering comes in order that it may break the fetters of the heart and that the heart may, like a butterfly, fly to Him, the Eternal.

These true men never shirked from daily work : they did their duties prescribed for the work they had. And they attained to the Highest by the four-fold means of non-attachment, self-control, chastity, and deep sympathy and compassion. The four means were their daily offering to the Lord.

And one thing was emphasised by every one of these four simple men. They lived indifferent to wealth. They understood that wealth, ever on the move, enfeebles intellect. They, in different ways, learnt the truth that man is hardened by wealth as water is hardened by cold blast. Man, they realised, is truly man, is warm and soft only as long as he

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is not hardened by wealth. Misery attends the acquisition of wealth, and misery attends the protection of wealth acquired, as there is misery in its coming and there is misery in its going.

"Fie upon wealth!" cries a Rishi of the Upanishadic era. There is no hope of man becoming immortal through wealth. This is the truth missed by all secular governments. This is the truth which is swiftly perceived by the pure, unclouded intellect of the true seeker after God.

Sri Chaitanya, Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa, Mahatma Gandhi, and Parushah,—in the brief sketches of these great ones we find that they all lived above the slavery of the senses which is, in no small measure, slavery to money or wealth. These great ones I call "genuine" men.

Emerson, who was an eastern soul clothed in a western body, rightly points out that every genuine man is rich in four marks of true humanity:—(1) he believes in himself; (2) he speaks the truth; (3) he thinks the truth; and (4) he acts the truth. Therefore, every genuine man is truly free. In this freedom is the true grandeur of the genuine man.

The dominant notes of such a man are truth and freedom. Therefore is such a man self-reliant. He sees that the Self, the *Atman*, is the one reality of life. The genuine man's self-reliance grows out of his self-realisation. The primacy of the *Atman*, the Self, is the essence of the life and activities of the genuine man. Beneath the floor of all events and activities, the genuine man perceives the identity of the *Atman*, the Spirit. This is the secret of the character of the genuine man. This, too, is the secret of the deep underlying force in his character.

The genuine man is, therefore, essentially a man of tremendous will-power. Beautifully is this thought expressed in one of the sayings of Yuddhishtra :—"Depth such as

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SRI CHAITANYA MAHAPRABHU

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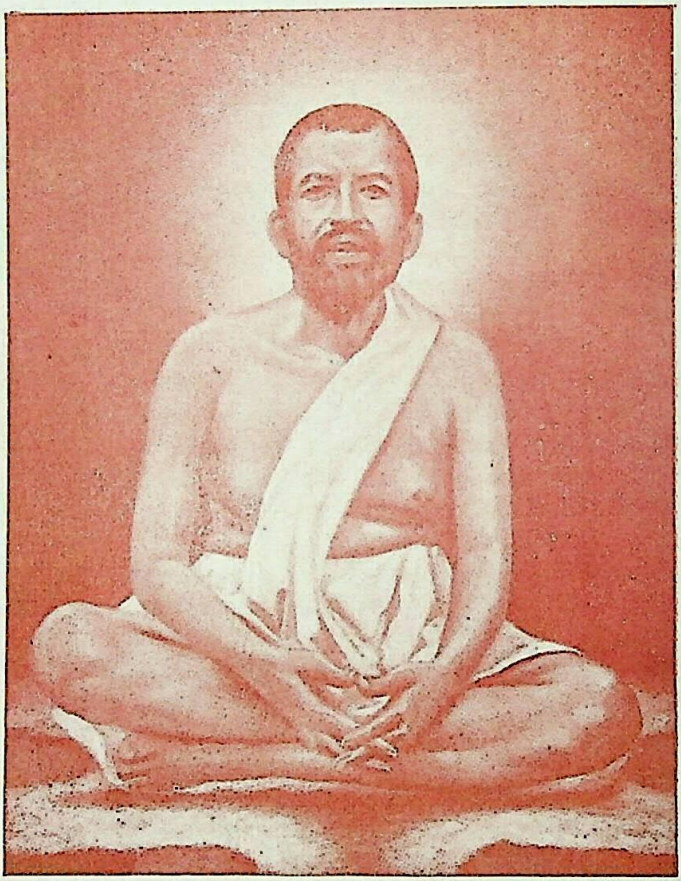

SRI RAMAKRISHNA PARAMAHANSA

Don't find fault with any one, not even with an insect.
As you pray to God for devotion, so also pray that you may not find fault with any one.

—*Sri Ramakrishna*

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of the ocean, firmness such as of the mountain, yet internal coolness such as of the moon, these arise in the man who is established in the *Atman*, the Self."

Food is not cooked without fire. So life's purpose is not achieved without strong will-power. Sri Shankara, one of the greatest thinkers of humanity, rightly says that he who would grow in the life of the Spirit must have in his being unbreakable will-power. Sri Shankara calls it *vajra* or thunderbolt.

SUCH a man appeared in Sind almost a century ago. In a small room built on the bank of the river Indus, at Rohri, burnt a little light. And many came from many villages to bow to the memory of this saint,—Sant Parushah. And the light burnt brightly until the ill-fated partition.

Parushah was a poor man, a clerk in a government office. One day, suddenly, awoke in his heart a thought. "What am I doing?" he said. "Every day I spend in slavery to the office routine. Every day I spend in shifting books and registers and files in obedience to my superior. I receive a few rupees every month and let the days pass. In forgetfulness I live." He said to himself :—" This shall no longer be !" Summoning up the strength of his will-power, he sent in a resignation of his office.

He saluted the setting sun, for it was evening when he resolved to resign his petty clerkship. Then he went out to a quiet place. He sat in the hills for some years. He meditated :—"What am I ? What is the *Atman*?" After years of meditation, he saw a Light shining within him. He returned to his village-home, a changed man. On the Shivratri night, he saw the Light and he communed with Shiva, the great Spirit of the Light. A short sketch of this Sindhi Saint, Parushah, is given in these pages.

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THEN appears another short sketch of the great-souled Gandhi. A strange mystic he who saw the image of God even upon the faces of brutes. He was a mystic and he was a fighter, a soldier who fought with the weapons of a saint. He fought nobly, ever saying to himself :—"The soldier must fight on and must never be afraid of death!"

Gandhi was a soldier who fought with faith in his heart. It was the faith which gave strength to the early Christians to conquer the Roman oppressors. Faith conquers force. Gandhi fought with the weapon of faith, forgiving his enemies, relying entirely, absolutely, on God.

It is significant that in his fight in South Africa for the freedom of the Asiatic, Gandhi suspended, from time to time, his plan of non-cooperation and even offered his active assistance. And during the Boer War, he organised the Indian Red Cross. He was twice cited for courage shown under fire. And when a virulent plague broke out, he personally attended to the sick, whether they were Indians or whites.

No doubt, he appeared to many as a peculiar man with peculiar methods. Once, indeed, he was brutally man-handled by the mob. He was taken for dead. He was cast into a ditch. It took them sometime to understand that this peculiar man had, in his hands, a weapon of non-resistance. His battle was bloodless.

General Smuts was the man who commanded the army which was fighting against Gandhi. It is this General who paid, one day, a remarkable tribute to the true greatness of Gandhi. He said :—"You, Gandhi, help us in our day of need. How can we lay hands upon you? You refuse to injure the enemy. You desire victory by self-suffering. You never transgress your limits of courtesy and chivalry. And that is what reduces us to sheer helplessness."

"I teach," said Gandhi, "a new kind of revolt, hatred

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not against the rulers but against our rulers' hatred. I will minister to all who are in need. I will serve them as my brothers. And I will not submit to the rulers as my overlords. I would meet violence with non-violence."

He went all the way to London to organise an Indian Ambulance Corps as a help to England's struggle against Germany. And England responded by promising Indian independence after the war. Gandhi believed, and he risked his life, again and again, for his British brothers. But at the close of the war, British imperialists went back on their promise : they were moved by a spirit of selfish greed. India was too rich a prize to let go! The Hindus were disillusioned. The fire of revolt blazed across India! And Gandhi led this revolt, but never gave up his faith in non-violence.

Many Hindus took violent exception to Gandhi. "Your goodwill," they said to him, "has been repaid with derision." "Where is your vaunted weapon now?" they mocked at him. But Gandhi said :—"Wait and see! Victories are not won in a day." "I cultivate," he said, "in my soldiers the courage of dying without killing. I believe that non-violence is infinitely superior to violence, forgiveness is more manly than punishment."

"I know," said Gandhi, "that many consider a non-violent victory impossible to achieve. I urge that such a victory may be far-off. It may not be realised in my life-time. It may take generations, but it is bound to come in the end." "I believe," he said, "in the brotherhood of man. Your enemy,—even he is your brother, a foolish brother. Serve him when he is hurt. Disobey him when he tries to hurt you. But no enemy can ever be strong enough to withstand the fire of your love."

With the same weapon of non-violence Gandhi fought the evil of untouchability in India. Gandhi said :—"I

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do not wish to be re-born. But if I have to be re-born, I should want to be of the untouchables, so that I may share their sorrow and endeavour to free them from their miserable condition."

GANDHI never spoke mere words. He translated his words into action. And to show his utter sincerity that he desired the abolition of the evil of untouchability, he adopted an untouchable girl and took her into his family.

Gandhi believed that when man forgot his duty to man, Krishna, the God of Love, came down to us in human form for the protection of all that is good, for the destruction of all that is evil, for establishment of *dharma*, the love of truth. Krishna is born and re-born for ever and ever. Krishna suffers and dies that mankind may be redeemed.

But Gandhi believed further that Jesus, like Krishna, was a revelation of God in human form. As for himself, Gandhi said :—"I am called Mahatma, but I am an ordinary man. I have blundered. I have committed mistakes. I am a soldier accidentally promoted to higher rank. I am, perhaps, the poorest general any army ever had. But I have discovered a new way of war." "India's independence," he urged, "will come not through body-force but through soul-force."

And Gandhi lived as an humble man. His dress was a simple loin-cloth. His room was almost devoid of furniture. His food was a handful of dates, a sip of orange juice, a cup of goat's milk. And he asked his countrymen to look upon him in no way different from the rest of them. His people looked to him with reverence. Gandhi smiled when they bowed to him. "Foolish lovable children," said Gandhi.

One day, they asked him to speak to them. Gandhi stood up. There were Maharajas in the gathering. As Gandhi kept on speaking, the rich princes melted away,

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one by one, until nobody was left! And Gandhi said :—"Nobody but God, the chairman and myself remained, while I was speaking." A few minutes later, the chairman, too, left. "Poor fellow," said Gandhi, "he must have felt very uncomfortable in that strange company."

He was in London. One of the reporters looked at Gandhi and laughed. Gandhi had not even a neck-tie. Gandhi looked at the reporter and laughed. "The only difference in our dress," he said, "is that you wear plus-fours, I wear minus fours." And then he said :—"If this depression continues much longer, I shall be, perhaps, the best-dressed man in England."

Gandhi laughed at this civilisation which concealed a savage heart. Gandhi said :—"This civilisation takes note neither of morality nor of religion." "What is true civilisation?" they asked Gandhi. His reply was in two words :—"God conduct." Soul-force, Gandhi urged, was the secret of true civilisation. With soul-force Gandhi fought his battle for freedom against all enemies, whether yellow or brown or white.

I believe Gandhi's day is yet to come. It will be a day when not India alone but the nations of the world will know how truly great was this humble servant of God. Over and over again, I have thought of his wonderful life and his wonderful sayings,—the golden thoughts of Gandhi, as I call them. Some of them I inscribe below :—

**Where love is there God is, also.

**You may read books, but they cannot carry you far. Real education consists in drawing the best out of yourself. What better book can there be than the book of humanity?

**One is not completely dressed unless one wears a smile.

**Religion which takes no account of practical affairs

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and does not help us in life is no religion.

**Purity of life is the highest and truest art. The art of producing good music from a cultivated voice can be achieved by many. But the art of producing a richer music which is the harmony of pure life is achieved very rarely.

**Man is neither mere intellect nor a gross animal body nor the heart nor soul alone. A proper and harmonious combination of all the three is required for the making of the whole man and is the true economics of education.

**What is education without character? And what is character without purity? Purity of character and salvation, which grows out of purity of heart, is the secret of the genuine man. Character cannot be built with mortar and stone. It cannot be built by other hands than your own. The Principal or Professor of a College cannot give you character from the pages of books. Character-building comes from your own lives. It comes from within yourselves.

**A nation's culture resides in the hearts and in the souls of the people.

**Prayer is an impossibility without a living faith in the presence of God within.

**Women are special custodians of all that is pure and religious in life. Conservative by nature, if they are slow to shed superstitious habits, they are also slow to give up all that is pure and noble in life.

**The true source of rights is duty. If we discharge our duties, rights will not be far to seek. If leaving duties, we run after rights, rights escape us like the will o' the wisp. The more we pursue them the farther will they fly. This teaching is embodied by Krishna in the immortal words :—"Action is thy end: leave thou the

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fruit severely alone!" Action is duty, fruit is the right.

**To conquer the subtle passions seems to me to be harder than the physical conquest of the world by force of arms.

**Temples or mosques or churches,—I make no distinction between these different roads to God. They are what faith has made them. They are an answer to man's craving to reach the Unseen.

**The highest moral law is that we should work for the good of mankind. When once we have grasped this vital truth, all laws of morality will stand self-revealed.

SIGNIFICANT is the Gandhian "Socialism." It thinks of the last and the least. Gandhian Socialism is, in one word, *sarvodaya*, the welfare of all. It teaches a fair deal for the last and the least one. It rests on the oneness of man. The One-in-all and the All-in-one is the Gandhian way. Fellowship of man, the solidarity of man, is what Gandhi emphasises.

Man, today, is not happy, for he is not free from fear,—fear of want, fear of struggle, fear of class-war, fear of the state's coercive apparatus. Therefore is man unhappy. Therefore is he restless, disillusioned. All use of the coercive power of the state means denial of freedom. This freedom, Gandhi urges, is denial of the centralised, regimented society which the modern state aims at. All this regimentation is soulless, thoughtless, heartless.

Man wants to feel like a man, feel the human touch. Man wants to be self-controlled, not state-controlled. Man does not want to be driven by the complex, complicated machinery of the centralised and mechanical state. Under such a state man feels like a helpless victim. Man feels that he is in the vicious grip of a monster. All the tricks to rob man of his freedom in the name of state socialism, Gandhi points out, are an illusion. They do not serve

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man. They enslave man. And they, in the long run, oppress and insult the dignity of man.

The way of Gandhi is the *sarvodaya* way, the way of self-control, not state-control. In the Gandhian way, each is for all and all are for each. For one and all realise the oneness of man, the fellowship of man, the solidarity of man. There is co-operation, but its motive is not self-interest, not even enlightened self-interest.

This conception of society, as Gandhi rightly sees, is revolution by consent, not by coercion, not by confiscation, but by a change of heart, not a change of the mere external society. All external changes in outlook and thought of society, all materialist, organisational changes without a vital fundamental change in outlook and thought, in conduct and action, are temporary and passing, dependent on the fear and the force of the state and, therefore, derogatory to the human spirit. In a few words, the essence of the Gandhian way is self-development through self-control, not through state-control.

SOME of the happiest moments of my life I have spent (1) at the shrine of a village-saint of Sind. It was a small house built on a bank of the river Indus. A little lamp kept burning at the feet of this saint. And during the few days I stayed there, I gazed at the little lamp in the little shrine, early morning, every day.

(2) Some blessed hours of my life I spent, too, at the shrine of Keshub Chandra Sen. During my stay in Bengal, I went to this shrine, again and again. It was a small room, but a beautiful one. And sometimes, looking at it, in the silence of the evening, I found mine eyes were touched with tears.

(3) During the period of my stay in Bengal, I sat in silence in a corner and looked at the image of Sri Rama-

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krishna Paramahansa. The river Ganges flowed by. It was a great help to the heart in its effort at meditation on the *Atman*. And, over and over again, looking at the image of Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa, I said to myself :—"As one thread penetrates all flowers in a garland, so the One *Atman*, the One Self, penetrates all *jivas*, all beings." And when this thought would grow, the thought of the One *Atman* in all, this other thought would come up :—"Serve all! Love all! Be kind to all! And so be established in *Brahman*, the Supreme Consciousness."

When one *Atman* dwells in all, why should I hate others? Why should I use harsh words? Why should I dominate others? Why should I think of exploiting others? Why should I be intolerant? Behold, said my heart, the One-in-all and All-in-one! All bodies are mine. The whole world is my body, my sweet home. I work in all hands. I eat in all mouths. I am the Immortal *Atman* in all.

And feeling this, I felt what a beautiful life is the life that is radiant in the thought of the oneness of life, the unity of consciousness! When I talk or sing, when I bathe or dress, when I write a letter, when I work in the office, is not every movement, every action, every thought, every feeling spiritualised, transmuted into *yagna?*

Gradually, all names and forms vanish. Gradually, the feeling grows within :—*Ahamasmi*. I exist! Then the cry arises, the cry of the heart :—*Om Ek Satchidananda Atman*. I feel there is in all a new life,—the life that is established in *Brahman*. Then shines the sun of wisdom. *Gnana Surya* is radiant. A true *gnani*, a man of true knowledge, has different eyes, has a different angle of vision. A man of wisdom looks upon everything from a different point of view. The man who wears green spectacles sees greenness everywhere. So the man of true knowledge sees the *Atman* everywhere. Thus is the lower self gradually annihilated, and

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the one thought grows within that to live is to serve all. For all is but myself only.

This is the cosmic vision of the true seer. The river joins the ocean. So does the man of true knowledge join the ocean of bliss, knowledge. The man becomes new. He is young, ever young. When Bayazid, a Sufi fakir, a dervish of God, was asked :—"Master! how old are you?" The Sufi said :—"Four years am I!" "How can that be?" they asked. Bayazid answered :—"My God was concealed from my soul, by the conspiracy of the world against me, for seventy years. Now I glimpse a little of the beauty of God. During the last four years this beauty has ravished me. They are the years which count as the period of my life. So I say four years am I!"

RAMAKRISHNA Paramahansa, like Surdas, like Kabir, like Tulsi, appeared in a different period of India's history. *Satya yuga*, which is the age which emphasises the inner life, had long disappeared. *Kaliyuga* had set in, as a part of the cycle of time. And *Kaliyuga*, with its emphasis on the outer world and outer life, *Kaliyuga* with its absorbing interest in secularism, had dragged the Indian people from the spiritual vision of India's Rishis. Ramakrishna appeared as a prophet of the inner life and spiritual vision. Ramakrishna came with his song of the heart, his religion of the heart. His message was, essentially, a message of the purified and the emancipated heart. Ramakrishna was a simple man of the village. And in his heart there was place for the Hindu and the Muslim, for the Christian and the agnostic, for all religions, all creeds. Ramakrishna became a devotee of the One whom he called Mother. Ramakrishna was a child of the Mother.

In his religion, there was room for temples and mosques, for all religions. There was room for images and idols.

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There was room for all castes, but above them all and within them he saw shining the one radiance which he called the Mother, God.

This villager was a mystic. With a smiling face, he saw all. He was not an ascetic with a pale, emaciated face. He was a singer of joy. He was a child of the Mother. He was a free, radiant spirit, sending out of his heart to all Hindus, to all Muslims, to men of all religions and no religion, to all creatures including birds and beasts, the love of his heart. He saw in them all the One Lord, the One Mother sitting with Her creatures to play with them the *leela* of joy.

Ramakrishna realised that religion, to be a source of blessing, must reconcile, must unify, not fight. Ramakrishna saw in the Sufi and the Pandit and the college undergraduate the One Mother. Ramakrishna blessed all and ever spoke the one word :—"Be reconciled!" Like the great teacher, Kabir, who appeared before him, Ramakrishna said :—"I am a child of Rama and Allah! I accept all Gurus and Pirs." Ramakrishna said, again and again :—"Mother! I am thine. I live by the holy Name. What avails it to wash my mouth, to count my beads, to bathe in the holy streams, to bow to temples, to go on pilgrimages, if purity is not in my heart?"

In my search of the Secret of life, I journeyed to the North, I journeyed to the South. Many temples I saw. Three of them attracted me. I often rested there is quiet communion.

The first was a shrine sacred to a Sindhi saint. A short sketch of him appears in this number. This saint passed away, about half a century ago, on the Basant Panchami day. He passed away in my native-land, Sind. This Sindhi lives in the hearts of many of us today. He lived not for himself but for others. Picori, the well-known

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Hungarian patriot, who had to leave his own country and who lived as an exile in America, said :—"To live for others is the pinnacle of manhood. He is truly a man who liveth not for himself but for others."

This young saint was named Parushah. Many came from the neighbouring villages to have his *darshana*. With his own hands he cooked meals for them all. He looked into the eyes of the pilgrims and said :—"Sisters and brothers! love ye one another and make your country a servant of humanity!" His life was rich in simplicity and strength. It was a life radiant in love.

At his shrine, at his little village Rohri, in Sind, I often spent many summer days. And sometimes, sitting in the mountains, where this saint spent some years in meditation, I loved to sing the song dear to him:—"*Rāma simar, Rāma simar, yehi tero kāj hai!* Remember Rama! Remember Rama! This is thy work in life!"

The second shrine which I visited, again and again, in evenings, was a shrine built by Keshub Chandra Sen. Max Muller, a student of eastern religions, called Keshub "one of the greatest Asiatics." Yes,—he was one of the greatest in his day, in East and West. His teachings, his discourses and his prayers gave a new awakening to educated India. He drew to himself Sadhu Navalrai of Sind: he inspired Sadhu Hiranand.

"What is prayer?" they asked him. He said :—"Prayer is life!" Religion, he urged, is not a creed. Religion is life. You will not find Sri Bhagawan in temples and ceremonies. Religion means Life in the Spirit or it means nothing. Sri Keshub and Sri Ramakrishna were personal friends. Both had burning love of God and *bhakti*. Both taught that no religion was false. Each religion had a value of its own. And in all saints and prophets shone the One Light. Keshub asked his disciples to turn away from creeds

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and dogmas to the religion of life, the religion of God-consciousness. The world wanders, alas! in darkness today. In all the spheres of life,—in politics, in social reform, in education, in religion,—the world's piteous need is the Light of God. And the nations will not be truly happy without a new awakening of God-consciousness.

Ramakrishna was not a man of books. He was illiterate, but he was an illuminated one. He dived deep in the fountain of wisdom, in the heart within. So did the mystics and saints of India. When I think of Ramakrishna, I think of Baba Farid and Bula Shah, of Shah Latif of Sind, of Shankar Acharya and St. Tukaram and St. Gnaneshwara of Maharashtra, of Guru Nanak and Kabir, of Namdev and Ramdas.

THE keynote to Ramakrishna's life was in the one word,—renunciation. The Sufis of Sind loved to dwell in the desert. From all creatures, from all earthly things, Ramakrishna turned to God.

In the Gita we have the same central message. In the eighteenth chapter, Sri Krishna says :—"Abandon all duties and come to Me for shelter! Be not grieved. I shall relieve thee from all evils!"

Activities, which take us away from God, all wordly activities, *prakritic* activities, are dead. They cannot take us to the Lord of our life. Non-Godly activity, secular activity, cannot gain for us God. Man, thou first must become naught. Then wilt thou be transformed. The naught will be transformed into aught according to the Divine Will.

Ramakrishna gave to an India, dominated by cold materialistic westernism, the message :—"I am Thy son, Thy child, Mother! And I love Thee!" Ramakrishna was at one with Chaitanya in his love for Krishna and broken humanity. All beside Thee, O Lord! all earthly things will pass away.

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So bless us, Lord! that in our long exile, from birth to birth, Thy love may ne'er be lost to us.

Ramakrishna I love to think of as Paramahansa. And his message, I believe, is at once for India and the West. In India, so many today think in terms of economics and of a civilisation of which the essence is industrialism. Out of industrialism, I believe, are the issues of materialistic outlook upon life. Alike in East and West, today, men are unhappy. All over the world the state is being defied. Youngmen, today, say that in their hearts is communism, not the teaching of the Rishis, the Seers of humanity. Leningrad, today, boasts of its anti-religious museum. And the great cities of India talk of Marx and Lenin, forgetting the rich inheritance of the Gita and the Upanishads. An increasing number of Indian girls repeat the words of the young woman of the West who said :—"We don't believe in God. There is no purpose in life : it has no meaning."

Never was Ramakrishna tired of repeating this message to all who met him :—"Love God, and in loving Him find the fulfilment of your life!"

And in him shineth the light of love who hath destroyed his ego, who hath cancelled the "I" : and becoming a zero, he passes on and enters into "infinity." Cancel the ego : what remains is the *Atman*, the Self, the Spirit Divine.

"Who can ever know God?" said Ramakrishna one day. "It is the love of God I want."

Loving God, let me learn to love all. Let me love even those who go astray,—the sinners, too, not alone the saints. Let me love the simple and the little ones, love children,—the angels on earth.

THE way to reach God in this *yuga*, the *Kaliyuga*,—the age of possessions and power,—Ramakrishna says, again and again, is *bhakti marga*, the Way of Love. And there

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are five things asked of everyone who would tread this path,—the path of *bhakti* or love.

(1) Sing God's Name (*Nama*) and the glories of God (*vibhutis*).

(2) Keep holy company. Be in contact with a *bhakta* or a saint of God, so that you may move, every day and every night, in an atmosphere of purity and aspiration.

(3) Every day go into silence and meditate on God, on Kali the Mother, on a saint or a *bhakta*, on the words and deeds of Krishna or Chaitanya, of Jesus or Buddha, of Nanak or Kabir. Retire to a corner, and meditate on this truth, again and again :—"God alone is Real." See, how everything in the world is passing! All things go. Houses, buildings, institutions, kingdoms, empires,—they pass away. Alone the Mother Divine is Real. Meditating thus, in silence and solitude, you will develop what the Rishis have called *viveka*, discrimination. You will know that all things are fleeting, that only the One, the *Atman*, abides. All things pass away.

And all things of the universe, Ramakrishna sums up under two headings :—*Kanchan* and *kamini*. *Kanchan* is gold, is money, is wealth. *Kamini* is woman. *Kanchan* is greed : *kamini* is lust. *Kanchan* is wealth of the world : *kamini* is sex-urge, passion. *Kanchan* and *kamini* both perish. So run not after them! Seek alone what is Imperishable. Seek the Real, the Abiding, the Eternal.

(4) Do your duty, everyday : but do not forget God! You have your work to do : you have your family to look after. But see that neither "work" nor "family" absorbs all your time and energies. Your *swadharma* you must do : your duties you must fulfil : but forget not *smaran*. Do your daily work, but keep Hari in your heart!

From a village I brought a cook to serve me, when I was out of beloved Sind. Day after day, he would sit in the

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kitchen and do his duty. He served me honestly : he cooked for me : but, sitting in the kitchen, his face would, again and again, wear a solemn appearance. "What is the matter?" I asked. And he said to me :—"Sir! here I sit far away from my home. Here I sit and serve : I sit and do my duty : I cook for you : but my thoughts go out, again and again, to my home in the village."

What the servant said is beautifully true. Let me do my duty, everyday. But even as in the heart of the cook was a memory of his home in the village in the midst of his daily work, so should I have in my heart, in the midst of all my activities, my daily duties, a remembrance of my true Homeland in the Spirit.

(5) Have a longing in your heart for God! And let that longing reflect itself in tears. People, Ramakrishna says, weep for money, for children, for wife, for honours of the earth. O, exclaims Ramakrishna, how many weep for God? Weep for the Divine Mother, the saint says, and She will not leave you, Her child. Weep for Her and She will come and greet you and lift you in Her lap.

The deepest longing in Ramakrishna's heart was for communion with the Divine Mother.

Centuries before Ramakrishna trod the soil of India, a great thinker, one of the greatest the world has seen,—Shankar Acharya,—glimpsed the truth that in *bhakti* was reflected the "true form" of the *Atman*, the real Self. Shankara said :—"Among the instruments of *mukti*, emancipation, the supreme is *bhakti*, devotion, love."

RAMAKRISHNA loved to think of himself as a pilgrim on the path of love. His prayer of prayers, his one continuous aspiration, his richest realisation, was God. With every breath of his being he breathed out this one longing :—"Give Thou me Thyself!"

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A great Sufi rightly said :—"The first condition of him, who would be a pilgrim on the road of love, is,—make yourself humble as dust and ashes. Ramakrishna, it may be truly said, was humble as dust and ashes, humble as a blade of grass. Ramakrishna's *bhakti* was rich in radiance,—the radiance of humility.

The vision of the "Bhagavad Gita" was verified in the daily life of Ramakrishna :—"Learn to look with an equal eye upon all beings, seeing the One Self in all." And in all did Ramakrishna behold his Divine Mother.

Ramakrishna had learnt to lose himself (1) in the Divine Spirit, and (2) in every form of the Divine Spirit. "When you learn to lose yourself," said a great teacher of the Inner Way, "you will reach the Beloved." And Ramakrishna's joy it was to meet the Beloved everywhere,—in every form, in every manifestation, in sun and rain, in toil and labour, in service and sacrifice, among the lowly and the lost. To Ramakrishna, the Divine Mother Kali was radiant in life, radiant in death. Death, too, was to him a messenger of the Mother, a "friend" of God.

The mystical vision of the One was, in Ramakrishna, blended with the Vaishnava ideal which saw Him in *maya*, too: so was *maya* transformed into *leela*, a play of the Divine Life, an instrument of the Spirit. *Maya* was no longer a bondage. *Sansara*, the world, was no more a thing to be shunned. Fetters had fallen. The world became a manifestation of the Divine Mother.

Most marvellous experiences came to Ramakrishna in the unfolding of his interior life. Suddenly, it dawned upon him that he was Radha, the beloved of Krishna. And for some days, Ramakrishna wore Radha's dress: in a trance he saw Krishna,—the Beloved. Ramakrishna realised he was not in bondage to matter, to things or phenomena: he was free, a *mukta*, a *nitya-mukta*. And he realised the rich-

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ness of his unity with the poor, the outcast, the fallen, the sinner. He was born in a brahmin-family: henceforth, he felt he was one with the outcast, the *chandala*. Ramakrishna began to do the scavenger's work: and he began to take food given to beggars and *chandals*. He cleansed the temple like an outcast during the night: and he ate the fragments of food left by beggars at the temple.

The supreme vision of the One-in-all filled his heart: he would bow down before prostitutes and ask them to bless him. Ramakrishna rejoiced in being a worshipper of the poor and the lowly. The outcasts were not strangers to him. The broken ones became his brothers.

THEY asked me, what I thought was the religion of Ramakrishna. Was it Vedanta? Was it Saivism? Was it the Hindu Faith? Was it the Faith of the Muslim fakir or the Christian saint? Was it the Faith of the Buddhist arhat, the Faith of the bodhisatva who would not enter into *nirvana* until all creatures had been saved? In answer to the question, I said:—"Ramakrishna's religion was the Religion of Love." And they, indeed, who love, have no religion but the Divine Mother! The supreme message of Ramakrishna to modern India and the modern world is this message of harmony, unity, love.

Ramakrishna taught the truth that if we would, indeed, see God, and serve God, we must look into the heart within. Therefore, (1) must the heart be lowly; and (2) the heart must be kindled with the fire of love. In East and West, everywhere, there is piteous need, today, not of intellectuals, not of industrialists, not of technological institutes, not of an external, superficial "civilisation" of money and the machine. The most urgent need, today, is of burning hearts, —hearts that are humble and lowly and radiant with love. Burning hearts, not men of power and possessions, will

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lay the foundation of a new peace-movement and be, in a quiet, humble way, the builders of a new brotherly civilisation.

The great Persian mystic, Rumi, in a beautiful poem, tells us of how, one day, Moses, the Prophet, sees a shepherd on the way, crying:—"O Lord! where art Thou? I long to serve Thee and comb Thy hair and wash Thy clothes and kill Thy lice and bring milk to Thee and kiss Thy little hand and rub Thy little feet and sweep Thy little room at night before Thou dost retire."

Moses, the Prophet, hearing these words is greatly annoyed and quickly he speaks rough words to the shepherd:—"O foolish man! to whom are you speaking these foolish words? What blasphemy are you uttering? Better that you were stricken dumb than that you should speak thus to God, the Most High. Thy words are a crime, O shepherd! Put cotton into your mouth and speak no longer a word of irreverence to thy Lord who, in a moment, can consume thee to ashes and dust."

And the shepherd, we are told, rends his garment in agony and heaves a sigh and goes quickly forth into the wilderness.

Then unto Moses comes a revelation at night. To Moses speaks the Lord:—"Moses! thou wert sent into the world to unite, not to sever. But thou hast parted from Me My servant, My devotee. Dear to Me is that shepherd. Forget not, Moses! that every mode of worship is Mine. The modes are many: religions are many: yet all are Mine. Each one has his own path, his own way, his own form, his own idiom. Moses! I look not at tongue and words : I look at the spirit and the inward feeling."

And Moses goes out to meet the shepherd and says to him:—"I repent! And I ask thee to forgive me!"

I love to think of Ramakrishna, as I do of the Rishis, as sent to unite, not sever. Verily, Ramakrishna was of the race of the Rishis.

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Ramakrishna was a singer of God's hymn of life. He saw God in all rites, in all creeds, in all religions. Rejoice with me, he said; rejoice, for I tell you that God alone is, that life is one. Rejoice, for religions are many. These many religions are here to reconcile, to unite life, to make us all one in the One! In all these religions the One King of all is singing :—

Be still, my soul !
Withdraw thee from thyself :
For He, thy King, approaches.
His Feet are on thy threshold.
Open the door !
Open it wide with happy welcoming
That He may enter in !

Yes,— He enters in our hearts through the windows of many religions. Cry out like the singer who said:—"Hold Thou me up and I shall be safe!"

Never forget that love is the key. With love in our hearts we shall be brought victorious through all difficulties of life.

WHAT a difference between the vision of Ramakrishna and the teaching of the communists! Lenin was a great leader of Russia. He said on one occasion:—"Why should we be squeamish about the sacrifices to our righteous cause?" "It does not matter," he said, " if three quarters of mankind are destroyed. All that counts is that ultimately the last quarter should become communist. Later centuries will justify the cruelties to which circumstances have forced us."

Lenin was a man with nobility of heart and noble resolves. But Lenin could not rise to Ramakrishna's vision. Materialist communism and capitalism both trample upon the teaching of India's Rishis. How beautiful are Ramakrishna's words:— "To my Divine Mother I prayed for pure love. I offered

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flowers at Her Lotus-feet and I prayed:— 'Mother! here is virtue and here is vice: both these I give to Thee. Take them both and grant me only pure love for Thee!

'Mother! here is knowledge and here is ignorance. Take them both and grant me only pure love for Thee!

'Mother! here is purity and here is impurity. Take them both and grant me only pure love for Thee!' "

This was the teaching given in the *ashramas* of India. A new outpouring of this wisdom is what the soul of modern India cries for. I plead specially with the youths of the nation to take into their hearts the message of the ancient *ashramas*:— "He is one: He hath no caste. All communities, all countries, all nations belong to Him!"

To Ramakrishna all religions were paths to the Supreme. For in all creatures Ramakrishna saw the breath of the One Life. When Vivekananda pressed Ramakrishna to let him abide in *samadhi*, Ramakrishna said to him:— "O Seeker of the Supreme Being ! look around you and see that the world is sad, is broken, is smitten with suffering, is torn with tragedy. Seeing this, arise and be a servant of all who suffer. Remember, you cannot be truly happy while others are unhappy."

In an ancient book we read of a servant of humanity,— a servant of the poor and lowly. On the threshold of the heaven-world he stands, one day, when he hears a voice. It cometh from a corner of the earth. The voice says:— "In anguish am I. Is there none to help?" And the servant says:—"Not for me the joy of *mukti* or the heaven-world. Back to the earth let me go, for a brother or a sister is in pain!"

Such servants did the *ashramas* train in the days when India was truly great. Broken, alas! and deformed, today, is modern life. Much of what is named civilisation is isolation,—isolation of man from nature, of man from man,

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of man from bird and beast, of man from God.

THE hope of the world is not in the ideals of a soul-murdering capitalism but in the great cultures of the world: — (1) the spiritual culture of the Middle Ages; (2) the contemplative culture of ancient India; (3) the peasant culture of modern Russia. To these three I would add three other cultures:—(1) the culture of ancient Greece; (2) the Chinese culture of Confucius and Lao Tse; and (3) the Sufi culture of Arabia, Egypt and Iran.

One note common to these cultures is :—Life is a riddle, a mystery. Yet is life a fellowship of God with man. Inseparable are the Divine and the human. And he who denies the Life Divine is even as a flower denying the sun or a drop denying the sea. In the *ashramas* of India, the Rishis taught that in the little spark within was the union between God and the human heart. And the *ashrama* students breathed out, every day, the prayer:—"From darkness lead us into the Light!"

Ramakrishna, in the secularism and materialism of his day, stood boldly forward to bear witness to the Light. The Light, he said, shines in all religions, in all temples, in all mosques and churches. By many names is the Supreme called. But the Supreme is one, the Mother Divine. She is the Light.

Ishwara and Allah are names of the One Divine Mother. *Mandir* and *masjid* are *dhamas*, abodes of the one Supreme. And Ramakrishna prayed that India's men and women may have the proper understanding, the right understanding to see the One in all and, in that understanding, eschew the paths of separatism and fight and hatred.

All mosques, all temples are shrines of the One. And to see the One in all, Ramakrishna taught, was to become a servant of the poor and needy.

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Ramakrishna (1) communed in silence; and (2) he gave the love of his heart to the poor and broken ones; and (3) he looked and exclaimed:—"I see my Mother Divine all around me!" An ancient teacher of India exclaimed:—"O the Earth, my mother, O the Wind, my father, O Fire, my friend, O Sky, my brother! I hail you all with clasped hands!"

With a purified heart, Ramakrishna saw the Mother Divine all around himself. Desire, he said, all desire is bondage. *Mukti* is conquest of craving. "Who is free?" they asked him, one day. And Ramakrishna said:—"That man is free who has mastered his own self!" "My temple,—the Mother's Temple," he would often say, "is not made with hands. My creed is not found in books." Ramakrishna read very little. He read the book of nature and the book of *mahajanas*, the book of great souls.

"I worship," Ramakrishna said, "where the tall trees stand. I worship where there are running brooks." Ramakrishna spent much of his time in silent communion of the soul and in communion with the nature around him. In a beautiful garden was his temple. There he sat, every day. He freed his heart of greed and passion: and he freed his heart of flesh.

Ramakrishna lived, day after day, filled with the sense of the Infinite. He looked at the mountains and said:—"They commune with the Eternal." He looked at the midnight sky and was filled with the sense of wonder. And he had fellowship with the *Atman*, the Self, the deepest Self, the God-Self within him, the Mother Divine.

RAMAKRISHNA realised that the sacrifice which the Mother wants of every one of us is the *yagna* of *manas* or the mind and the *yagna* of our psychic nature, the desire principle, the sacrifice of egoism, the sacrifice of personality. Sacrifice ego

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and cling to the *Parama Purusha*, the Krishna Light, that shines in glory, when the veils of the ego are withdrawn. Be impersonal, non-egoistic, and you will enter into love.

One of the ways to do this is to be faithful to the Mother in little things. The craving for the big is unspiritual. Don't pick and choose. Accept what comes from Her. It comes for your discipline. Accept it in faith. And shed tears that you are still so far from the Mother. In little things comes the Mother to greet you. The more you run after the big or the great, the more you recede from Her.

All *dharmas*, said Ramakrishna, are good. But your own *dharma*, *swadharma*, is the best for you. For it brings you nearer the Mother. Religion is not inaction. Activity is good, except when it prevents your progress to God. True activity is that which is demanded by *swadharma*. In all *dharmas* the One Mother is working. There is no one *dharma* for all. Follow your own *dharma*. It is determined by the type and level of the stage of your growth. Your *swadharma* is what you should do according to the call of your evolution.

On the Indian stage of life have appeared a number of patriots and poets. Four of them, viz. (1) Guru Gobind Singh, (2) Swami Vivekananda, (3) Sri Keshub Chandra Sen, and (4) Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa, were men of strength and interior illumination. Guru Gobind Singh gave India the Khalsa brotherhood. Vivekananda spread India's name and fame in far countries. Sri Keshub Chandra gave a new interpretation of Christ and the Christian doctrines of the trinity. Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa spoke of the doctrine of the Mother, the Divine Mother, and he related it to the teaching of the Devi.

Ramakrishna and Keshub Chandra Sen were friends. Max Muller called them "two of the greatest Asiatics." Sri Keshub was, undoubtedly, one of the greatest of his

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days in East and West. At an early age, he took the vow to dedicate his life to the service of God and man.

Of all the books, the best, he said, is life. Sri Ramakrishna's emphasis was, also, on life. Both he and Keshub urged that religion was not creed. Religion was life.

Vivekananda was a disciple of Ramakrishna. He urged that India's need was new education. Current education, he said, was a cult of separation. This education divides us from the village-folk and we trample upon the divinity of the poor. The essential thing, said Vivekananda following Ramakrishna, is not a sharp intellect but a loving heart. "Millions of our countrymen," he said, "live in hunger and ignorance. I hold every man a traitor who pays no heed to the poor." "Why go ye," he said, "to seek for God in the temples? Are not the poor people Gods themselves? Why go ye to dig a well on the shores of the Ganges. Worship the Living God, the Man-God, every being who wears a human form. Go ye where there is an outbreak of famine or plague. Where the people are in distress, mitigate their sufferings. I bequeath to you, youngmen! this sympathy, this service of the poor, the ignorant, the oppressed.

"Was not Krishna a friend of the poor and lowly cowherds of Gokul? He, Krishna, never shrank to embrace the pariah, Guhaka. Krishna accepted the invitation of a prostitute in preference to that of the nobles. Forget not that He cometh from time to time for them whom He loveth above all,—the poor, the lowly and the oppressed. With the man who sees the Lord in the poor, Krishna is more pleased than with the man who sees Him only in the temples."

Yes,—we need the blessings of the poor. Share with them your food, your money, your gifts. And it is my faith that at the feet of the poor would be found India's long-lost freedom.

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We think of Sri Chaitanya when he has blossomed into spiritual greatness. And this begins with his new birth on his return from Gaya. Then he renounced all in the service of his Master. This renunciation is named *sanyasa*. It is necessary to note that his *sanyasa* was blended with fellowship and service. He did not aim at achieving his own private salvation. He realised that he was one with others, one with all,—all men, all creatures, all life. He did not shun activity, but his activity was not of the ordinary kind which creates entanglement, *moha*. His activity was without attachment. Krishna, the Beloved, and Krishna's Beloved, the "Gita" and the "Bhagavata," teach us to act and still to act without *moha*, desire, craving, *trisna*. Chaitanya's "activity" is what a great mystic and saint of the West calls "pure act."

Three marks there are of him who would walk the way of true activity or pure *karma*:—

(1) *Sat-karma*. His actions are directed to the "good" of all creatures. He has equal regard for all men, irrespective of birth or class. He ignores caste and he gives loving treatment not only to all men and women but to every creature. Every single bird, every single animal, is dear to him as an image of the Eternal.

(2) He realises that all is passing. Nothing stays: nothing abides,—except Krishna and His *bhakti*, Krishna and His *bhaktas*. Apart from Krishna every finite being is passing, is a phenomenon, is evanescent, is a shadow. This truth the great Buddhist mystics call *sunya*, emptiness, void, nothing, zero.

(3) Steeped, also, is his *karma* in *karuna*, compassion,—which is an emanation of love, pure love, which, indeed, is the very essence of "pure act."

Thus lived Sri Chaitanya. And he became to thousands of men and women a true spiritual guide, a *guru* of the true type, a brother, a spiritual elder, a *kalyana-mitra*, a friend

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who helped and led them all to the final goal.

Chaitanya drew many together to the Lotus-feet of Krishna, the Beloved. Vaishnavas they were called,—disciples and adorers of Vishnu. They constituted an "Order," a "Brotherhood," radiant with the light of Sri Krishna. This Order was not a monastic one. Men and women who entered this Order did their daily work but ever in the presence of Sri Krishna. This Order proved to be a great, uplifting influence in the life of Bengal, Orissa and several other parts of India.

Of this Order three were the "Masters," "Prabhus":—

(1) Sri Chaitanya, affectionately called "Mahaprabhu," the "Great Master";

(2) Nityananda, called a "Prabhu"; and

(3) Advaitananda, also, referred to in reverence as a "Prabhu" or "Master."

Still at Nadia you have the *gadi* (spiritual seat) of Nityananda : and that of Advaitananda may still be seen at Shantipur.

Nimai and Nityananda were, verily, to large crowds of men and women the very soul of *kirtan*. Their names have gone into the popular Vaishnava invocation :—"*Nitai Gaur Radhe Shyama!*" The *kirtan* in which Nimai and Nitai,—Chaitanya and Nityananda,—seemed to be blended into one, helped on Sri Chaitanya's movement to spread far and wide.

If Advaita Acharya and Nityananda spread Chaitanya's teachings in Bengal, two others spread the faith in Brindaban. They were Rupa and Sanatana. The story of their lives is a moving one. Rupa and Sanatana were great Sanskrit scholars and went to Brindaban, leaving their native-land, Bengal, for so Sri Chaitanya desired it. One of the dreams of Sri Chaitanya was that Brindaban, sanctified once by the presence and holy *lilas* of Sri Krishna, be re-built into

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a shrine worthy of associations with the Lord. Chaitanya, also, dreamt the dream of a new revival of Sanskrit literature and Sanskrit culture. Of this revival Brindaban was to be the home. In Brindaban, Rupa and Sanatana worked day and night. In Brindaban, too, they breathed the last benediction of their truly dedicated lives.

Sri Chaitanya prayed every day that all may be guided in the Krishna-way. And the Krishna-way was the way of *bhakti*, the way (1) of faith in the Lord, and (2) of love and compassion to the poor and needy. Chaitanya asked his disciples to serve orphans with love in their hearts. Sri Chaitanya taught, too, that no beggar should be turned out. He further taught that birds and beasts should be looked after. Sri Chaitanya repeatedly urged that the life of everyone should be built in faith in Krishna. And over and over again, he pointed out that this faith in Krishna must rise to its highest form, which he called *prema* or love. Love-filled, love-absorbed, love-intoxicated, indeed, was the life of Sri Chaitanya.

What longing thrilled Sri Chaitanya, thrilled his physical body, his mind and his heart! "Mine eyes rain tears," he said, again and again. And again :—"In separation from Govinda of my heart, from Krishna the Beloved, every second is prolonged to a *yuga*, an age."

And Chaitanya realised, how richly, that the love of Govinda, the mercy of Krishna, was as the sun which did shine on good and evil alike, was as the rain which regarded neither tribe nor caste nor family, but poured its benediction on everyone.

Filled with *bhakti*, Chaitanya fell into divine delirium, again and again : and in his ecstasy, he experienced separation from Krishna missing Him, again and again, yet finding Him, again and again. Chaitanya experienced at once

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the delirium of separation and the ecstasy of joy. Krishna had become the idol of his heart, the one *moorti* with which he communed with love intense, experiencing now sorrow, now joy.

In the *Chaitanya Charitamrita*, we read that Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, one day, uttered the following words :—

Unbearable to me
Is my separation
From Him, my Beloved!
What shall I do?
O tell me, where shall I go
To see my Beloved?
O, whom shall I ask of Him
Who singeth on the Flute
And captures my heart?

O Thou, the Master of life!
O Thou, my dearest dear!
O Thou, my life, my light, my love!
This separation from Thee
Breaketh my heart.
Come, my darling, come!
In Thy mercy, come!

And saying thus, Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu shed tears, then fell down, unconscious, in communion with his Beloved, Krishna.

THE *bhakta* in whose heart entered, as a fire of love, this ecstatic inspiration of Sri Chaitanya, was Haridas. To many Haridas was an untouchable. To Chaitanya and his true *bhaktas*, Haridas was a son of Krishna.

Bengal, in those days, was under the domination of the Muslims. And the Muslim magistrate of Bengal, whom

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they called Kazi, said that he was determined to drive out Chaitanya's religion from Bengal. He, the Muslim magistrate, first tried to induce Hari Das to stand aloof from Chaitanya. "Look," said the Kazi, "Chaitanya is a Hindu. You, Hari Das, are a Muslim. Stand aloof from Chaitanya and we shall know how to punish him. He does *kirtan* which, in this land of Islam, carries away so many in a frenzy of enthusiasm. I am the magistrate of Bengal, and what Sri Chaitanya does brings disgrace to me, for Chaitanya speaks of Sri Krishna. It is a slur on Muslim society to let *kirtan* to Krishna spread throughout this land which is conquered by Muslims!"

Hari Das's answer to this argument of the Kazi was in a few simple words. He said :—"Sir, how can I give up the chanting of *Sri Hari Nama?* Chaitanya is not a wicked person and Krishna is not a false God. How can I give up the practice of *Hari Nama?*"

The Kazi told him :—"I shall impose heavy punishment on you if you, born a Muslim, will continue to do Hindu *kirtan*! Dear brother, come back to us. Give up the company of Chaitanya."

But Hari Das was firm in his faith in Krishna and the threats of the Kazi could induce no change in the firm attitude of Hari Das. He said :— "Whatever the Lord wills is accomplished. None can go against the wishes of the Lord. Even if my body is cut to pieces, I will not give up chanting *Sri Hari Nama*."

The threats of the Kazi could do nothing. Hari Das remained true to Chaitanya and his daily *kirtan*, singing the holy words.

Hari Das was a poor man, but he was respected as a saint. And many said :—"Hari Das is a wonderful man. He does not surrender to the threats of the Kazi." Some actually knelt down to him, saying :—"Hari Das! we do

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not wish you to suffer pain. Listen to our request. Give up this *Nama kirtan*. Obey the Kazi!"

The Kazi issued an order to his men to whip Hari Das hard, whip him till he dropped down unconscious. The stony hearts of the cruel servants of the Kazi did not realise what a sin it was to ill-treat a saint of God. From street to street, they dragged Hari Das. He continued to do *kirtan*. They dragged him. He was absorbed in his *kirtan* of *Krishna-Nama*. The good and pious people of the town were shocked at the treatment given to Hari Das. Hari Das suffered pain but Chaitanya and Krishna's Name triumphed. Hari Das was beaten severely from street to street. They stripped him, but there was no change in the conduct of Hari Das. He remained lost in the bliss of *kirtan*.

Hari Das was beaten hard, until he fell down unconscious. Then they lifted his body and threw it in the waters of the Ganges. People thought that Hari Das was dead. When they looked up, they found Hari Das's body was floating over the river. Hari Das had received the whippings of the servants of the Kazi. "In surrender to Sri Krishna," Hari Das said, "if I am to face Himalayan hardships, if my body is chopped off, if life itself departs from my body, yet will I not give up chanting Sri Hari's blessed Name."

Even the Muslim inhabitants of the place were highly impressed by the endurance of Hari Das. They said :— "Hari Das is a great Pir." They bowed down to him in humility. The Muslim Kazi returned to his place a defeated man. Krishna's Name he could not conquer.

Sri Ramakrishna is called a Paramahansa. And Sri Chaitanya is revered as a Mahaprabhu, the Great Master. Both Ramakrishna and Sri Chaitanya regard the way of *bhakti* as excluding neither knowledge nor service. Both

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emphasise the value of *kirtan* or singing the Name of God. In Chaitanya's life Krishna-*bhakti* was beautifully blended with Krishna-*seva*. And Ramakrishna said to his beloved disciple, Vivekananda, that *samadhi* was not the true end of life. How can one be content to live in *samadhi* when all around is suffering, when humanity is broken? A Krishna-*bhakta* must rise to serve the poor and outcast. And Chaitanya, by day and by night, endeavoured to serve Hari Das, the Muslim singer of *Hari Nama*. *Seva* is a step on the ladder of ascent to the Beloved.

And the beginning of the ascent, said both Chaitanya and Ramakrishna, is renunciation. "If any will follow Me," said Jesus, "let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow Me!" Sri Chaitanya led a life of self-abnegation, a life of true renunciation. And renouncing all, he gave his love to all,—all friends, all foes, all men, all animals, all creatures of God. He gave his love to Nature and to children. He gave his love to outcasts. He gave his love to the poor and toiling men. To live the new life of devotion to Krishna, Chaitanya practised the renunciation of which Ramakrishna, too, spoke again and again.

This renunciation, Sri Chaitanya said, was twofold. Ramakrishna called these two essentials of renunciation (i) renunciation of *kanchan* or gold, (ii) renunciation of *kamini* or woman. Wealth and woman, both the great teachers emphasised, must be renounced by him who would, indeed, reach the Absolute.

Sri Chaitanya was at first a logician, a scholar. But as he grew in longing for the Lord, he became a *bhakta*. He realised that the inner renunciation of desires was essential to spiritual life. He realised that the *sansara* or the world was like a snake, smooth to the touch but deadly in its poison. A seer of the West has said :—"This world has neither worth nor weight with God. So slight it is. It weighs not

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with God as much as a pebble or a single clot of earth."

Chaitanya became a *sanyasin*, a homeless wanderer. He discarded logic or *nyaya*. He passed from "home" into "homelessness." As a homeless wanderer he was care-free, as are the birds of the air, singing the One Name Divine. He became like unto flowers of the fields, rich in beauty and simplicity. As a homeless wanderer, he moved, from place to place, for several years, before he entered into the deeper silence of contemplative life at Puri.

He was not afraid of poverty : he felt happy that he was poor. So Jesus said :—"My daily bread is hunger. My lantern at night is the moon : my fire by day is the sun : my fruit and fragrant herbs are the things the Earth brings forth for wild beasts and cattle. All the night I have nothing. Yet there is none richer than I!"

In two things was Chaitanya's joy :—(1) poverty and (2) *Hari Nama*. Chaitanya reminds me of Jesus and of spiritual fakirs of the eastern type. Chaitanya reaffirmed the doctrine of love. "Be like the tree," he often said to his disciples. "It giveth shade even to him who cuts off the branches of the tree!" When shall we of the modern world listen to this message? When shall we be banded together into one brotherhood of love and service? When shall we be like the tree?

CHAITANYA travelled as a pilgrim to many shrines. His "pilgrimages" were acts of "purification," and these were a means to self-realisation. He renounced the way of sholarship. He saw that he was a mendicant at the door of Krishna. A pilgrim to His shrine, he stood as a mendicant at His door. What gift did he ask of Krishna? "I ask Thee to give me Thyself!" was the constant prayer of Sri Chaitanya.

Far and wide he moved. He moved on to places of

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pilgrimage,—to purify his heart. He went as far South as Cape Comorin and as far West as Dwarka. Everywhere he sang *Hari Nama*,—the Holy Name,—and transformed the lives of many of those who came in contact with him. He passed through Vidyanagar and won the heart of the Governor of that place,—Ramanand Roy,—who became Chaitanya's devoted disciple. Everywhere he called himself "a wanderer in the service of Sri Krishna." Everywhere countless disciples greeted him. And all who listened to him were moved to aspire to (1) his deep humility; (2) his *bhakti* or love of God; and (3) his enraptured ecstasy. He roamed over a good part of India,—roamed from Orissa to the South, from Puri to Pandharpur.

Children in the South, who saw him and heard him, were fascinated by the beauty of his lotus-face. They remembered his one mystic word :—"*Hari bol! Hari bol!*" Indeed, many children forgot the long word, "Mahaprabhu Sri Chaitanya." They loved to say :—"He is Haribol!" By this name, "Haribol," they called him. In childlike simplicity they were absorbed in him, immersed in this holy man who said :—"*Haribol! Haribol!*"

Chaitanya resolved to set off for Brindaban. He wandered for three days, chanting from the *Bhagavata* the verse which I have learnt to chant, again and again. And Chaitanya chanted, again and again, these words of the *Bhagavata*, as he moved on his journey :—

I, too, shall cross the dark :
I, too, shall cross the sansara,—
The ocean dread of this world!
And I shall cross
By means of bhakti,
Of love and grace divine,
As did the sages of yore!

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And I shall enrich bhakti with service,—
The service of the Lotus-feet
Of Krishna, the Beloved!

Day and night, the Blessed One walked on foot with a view to reach Brindaban. Day and night, he had on his lips the sacred Name, "Hari! Hari!" He called his Beloved Krishna by this name,—Hari. Men and women saw him and for some minutes stopped to gaze at the beauty of his face. They gazed and exclaimed :—"Hari! Hari!"

SRI Chaitanya's life was rich in humility and compassion. The two were blended one with other. Be just, he said; but remember, your justice, too, must be tinged with compassion. Remember, he taught, that the worst sinner has a right to the mercy of God. All sinners, Sri Chaitanya taught, were within the radius of the love of Sri Krishna. "Everything that lives is holy!" taught Chaitanya, and centuries afterwards was this teaching delivered by the English mystic-poet, Blake.

Chaitanya's disciples, in obedience to the Master's wishes, gave up eating meat. His disciples ever showed tenderness and compassion to birds and beasts. His disciples served the cow and served the dog and served every creature, seeing in everyone an image of Sri Chaitanya, an image of Sri Krishna.

With compassion and humility and love in his heart, the Master, Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, went about doing good in a quiet, gentle way. Sri Chaitanya started a movement which was a centre of blessing to the poor and the outcast. Hari Das was an outcast : Chaitanya embraced him.

And how touching is that story of the Five Pathans who became Chaitanya's disciples. They had thought, at first,

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of attacking and plundering him but, coming nearer to him and gazing at the beauty of his lotus-face, they were converted and became his meek followers. They gave up meat-eating, for Sri Chaitanya asked them to do so. One of them was a Pir : Chaitanya re-named him calling him Ram Das. Another was a Prince whom Chaitanya re-named Bijli Khan. To these five Pathans, Sri Chaitanya gave his mantra :—"*Hari bol! Hari bol!*" And he embraced them, saying :—"I touch you to purify myself!" And to his Hindu disciples, Chaitanya said :—"The mercy of God regards neither caste nor family. On these Pathans has descended the mercy of Sri Krishna."

Chaitanya became a holy messenger of peace at Puri. To the great *mahant* (abbot) of the Jagannath Temple, Sri Chaitanya taught that *harijans* (untouchables) were one with Brahmins, that the true man of God was a servant of the lowly and the world-forsaken ones. At Puri, indeed, Chaitanya Mahaprabhu went, from time to time, to the cottage of the *harijan*, Hari Das, and there he ate of his meal of the day. Chaitanya touched the feet of Hari Das and said to him :—"Blessed are you among the sons of men, for dear to you is the Name,—*Hari Nama!*"

Sri Chaitanya, in the beauty of his life, has passed on to us all the great message :—"If you will be peace-makers, build your life in contemplation of *Hari Nama*, the Name of God. And in the love which proceedeth out of contemplation, go ye forth to serve the outcast, the poor, the broken ones!"

Sri Chaitanya walked earth-free. He seemed to transcend the dimensions of space. Has he not transcended today the earth,—the earth and the sea, the earth and all men, all the princes and principalities of this world? He abides as an immortal. He has, methinks, grown greater than he appeared to many in the days when he walked among

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men. Chaitanya has not expired. He plunged into the blue waters of the sea and was blended with Sri Krishna. He is of the immortals of history. Great captains and great warriors with their guns and drums are gone! Great politicians and statesmen, with the "crowds" applauding them "under orders," are gone! Their fame hath passed away. But Mahaprabhu Sri Chaitanya lives on!

"Krishna! Krishna!" was Chaitanya's one message to the people. His lips moved only in praise of the Lord. He was drunk in the wine of His wisdom. Chaitanya started with "renunciation" : he grew in the power of the Holy Name : he attained to "annihilation of the self." In his purified heart there was room only for the singing of the Holy Name. In love for Krishna, Chaitanya, renounced family, wealth and honours. He became a mendicant, he became a zero. Through *Hari Nama* he beheld the Face of Krishna. His "I" vanished : only Krishna remained! Chaitanya mastered the alphabet of abandonment. Chaitanya gained the wisdom of *prema-bhakti*. *Prema* was love and *bhakti* was the service of love in surrender.

Chaitanya become a true dervish and, in the love of Krishna, he loved the poor and broken ones. He served them with tender love in his heart. "Come! Come!" he said to them. "Come to Krishna! Why wander ye thus afar? You will not find the joy of life if you stray from the Lotus-feet of Krishna!"

Who is the pilgrim on the Path? And what is the end of pilgrimage? Chaitanya's answer was simple. He who knew himself in Krishna was the true pilgrim on the Path. And he reached the end of his pilgrimage who,purifying himself of desire, annihilated his ego, his lower self, and so was free, as fire burnt pure when no more darkened with smoke.

The purified heart, he said, attains to illumination and becomes an abode of the Beloved. Krishna enters in when

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the ego departs. When "I" vanishes, there is a void within and Krishna fills the void and reveals His Beauty.

The lower self, the ego, says the Gita, is the enemy of the Self. Die to self, says the Gita, if you would enter into the Life of the Spirit. Purify your heart. Make it a temple of the Lord, a mirror of manifestation, a throne of the Master.

In his last step in the ascent to the Life Divine, the aspirant is filled with the love of Krishna. Yet he never thinks :—"I love." But he says :—"Thou, Krishna, dost love me! What right have I to say 'I' or 'mine'?" Then he feels truly happy. Then he is calm. He gains Peace and Joy. A Light doth shine in his heart, and he sees there is but One Face Divine that shineth everywhere.

In the last period of his blessed life, Chaitanya touched the Transcendent, living more in silence and sacrifice than in speech. And often would Chaitanya gaze on the sea : and from the depths of its waves would come to him a Voice of Silence. And Chaitanya would, with tear-touched eyes, look astonished, "like one stupefied, a diver in the very sea of witnessing."

In the last period of his life, it seemed to his intimate disciples who seldom left him alone at night, that the Master, though in the body, had really passed away from himself,—passed away from everything except Krishna on whom he gazed and gazed with tear-filled eyes. In that one gaze was Chaitanya drowned,—astonished, dumbfounded.

With Chaitanya remained nothing save Krishna. The silent gaze of the Master seemed to say :—"Krishna is the Only Reality and within the heart is naught but Krishna!"

Then, indeed, from every drop of running waters and every ray of shining stars, from the tongue of every atom, came loud and clear to Chaitanya the one word :—"Krishna! Krishna!"

T. L. VASWANI

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PICTURES FROM SRI CHAITANYA

[1]

In 1945, I travelled to Nadia. For years together, I had dreamt of Nadia. In 1485, almost five hundred years ago, was the blessed one born in an humble cottage in Nadia. Nadia was a seat of Hindu learning. Kashi and Nadia were, in the fifteenth century, the two greatest centres of Hindu culture.

The atmosphere of Nadia was unspiritual. It was the land of pundits who argued much but knew little of the knowledge of *bhakti* (love). Nadia was infected with the pride of "learning." Sri Chaitanya was destined to change the atmosphere of Nadia. Sri Chaitanya, at one time a scholar, became a *bhakta* and called men and women to that true life of *bhakti* (faith and love) which is the secret of everyone who would be reborn in the Holy Spirit.

In the house, where it is believed Chaitanya was born, an annual spiritual festival takes place on the day on which he was born. We call it the "Holi." It marks a new turn in the cycle of seasons. It is the day when spring comes back with blessings on every home. An influence flows out that day, a fragrance emanates from trees and stones, from streams and stars. That day, we think, a new life moves on this ancient Earth : the southern breeze blows beautifully and the birds sing their new songs of hope and love.

On that day,—the blessed day named Holi,—was born Sri Chaitanya, a Prophet of Love. Like Guru Nanak and Saint Kabir, Sri Chaitanya bore witness to Divine Love. And out of him moved an influence which shaped the deeper life of Bengal and Orissa, of Bihar, Assam and the Deccan.

It may truly be said that the message of Sri Chaitanya is

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the message of Holi. It is a message of Divine Love,—love for God and love for man, love for all creatures. The coloured water poured on the Holi day is but a symbol of the love which should flow out of our hearts to the broken, shattered world.

At Nadia (Navadwipa) was born Nimai, destined to be a prophet and saint, a poet and a singer who heard, in blue clouds of the skies and in blue waters of the Jamuna and in blue-tinted flowers of the garden, Krishna and Radha singing together the Song of the Flute.

There was an eclipse of the moon. Dim earthen lamps were burning and crowds were bathing in the Ganges. Temple bells were ringing, conch shells were blowing, and men and women and children, with joy-filled hearts, were shouting, "*Hari bol! Hari bol!*" ("Sing the Name of the Lord!") when the child, whom millions were to revere as Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, was born.

His father's name was Jagannath Misra : his mother's name was Sachi Devi. Both were lovers of saints, and in both was the aspiration to live a spiritual life. Jagannath was a poor Brahmin but, like many a poor Brahmin, was versed in the *shastras* (Hindu scriptures) and in the Vedic lore (the Wisdom of the Rishis). Wisdom has ever been regarded as the true wealth of the Brahmin.

As the news spread of the birth of the baby, women congregated in the house of Jagannath and worshipped the new-born babe with lights and songs, and at his lotus-feet they laid their gifts.

In a cottage was he born : and he remained a lover of the poor in broken cottages. His mother called him Nimai.

Pandit Jagannath and Sachi Devi, though poor, were happy. Their lives were simple and pure. And every day, they drank at the fountain of Ancient Wisdom in the Vedas and other scriptures. Will the day return when men and

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women will drink of Wisdom again, and find their deepest joy in the chanting of the ancient *mantras* which teach love of God and brotherhood of mankind?

It was the *purnima* (full moon) night of Phalgun (February-March). On such a night, in the long ago, was Prahlada flung into the flaming fire, and the Gods protected him,—he was so pure,—and he came out of the fire radiant as thrice-refined gold.

Nimai was so beautiful. We read of the "golden colour" of his body. His fingers were slender,—an artist's fingers. His teeth gleamed white. His face, we read, was like the lotus. His eyes were large and luminous. The mother, Sachi Devi, gazed on Nimai's beautiful face, again and again, and gazing on it, was lost in wonderment. There was a light on his face : he looked so radiant!

[2]

NIMAI was healthy and fair and strong. From time to time, he laughed. Why? Who knows? The mother found it difficult to hold the babe in control. From time to time, he wept. The mother tried many ways to keep him quiet, but failed. One day, he was found weeping vehemently. What did he want? The mother tried to pacify him : he wept on! Then the mother, in her sweet soft voice, sang the following words :—

Hari Hari bol! Bol Hari bol!
Mukanda Madhava Govinda bol!

The effect was magical! Nimai no longer wept. In deep silence he listened to the lilt of Sachi Devi. She felt very happy. She had found the key to the little one's heart. Whenever he was in a fit of weeping the mother repeated the Name of Krishna, singing it softly, again and again, and Nimai, forgetting everything, went into the great silence

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of adoration,—*arati*.

Nimai was so beautiful, radiant, fair! And the neighbouring ladies loved to gaze on him, again and again. They called him Gaur, Gora, Gauranga, the fair one. They said to him :—"Thy body, O fair one! doth gleam like liquid moonlight! O child of beauty! we salute thee!"

[3]

NIMAI was a strange child. He was a few months old when his father placed before him rupees, pice, grain, clothes, weapons and books and told him :—"Child! pick up what you will!"

Quickly, Nimai placed his hand on one book,—the *Bhagavad Gita!*

The father, the mother and all others who were present were filled with joy and they exclaimed :—"Nimai will be a lover of Krishna!"

[4]

ONE day, Nimai was out alone, playing on the roadside. Ornaments were on his body : he looked so beautiful! A thief looked at the lovely child and was tempted by the gold ornaments. He took the child to a solitary place. He touched the fair form. He looked at the radiant face, when lo and behold! his heart began to change. He shed tears of repentance. Nimai's touch had transformed the thief! Nimai's lips were lit up with a strange, beautiful smile. The thief was converted and became a vessel of grace.

[5]

NEAR Mayapur,—Nimai's birthplace,—was a village named Ganganagar. It had a school (*pathshala*), presided over by Pundit Ganga Das. He was a great scholar.

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Admitted to his school, Nimai studied Sanskrit grammar, rhetoric, logic and *smrili* (tradition). Nimai was only eight years of age. In a few years, Nimai came to be regarded as one of the best scholars of Navadwipa. Nimai had a massive intellect : and his memory was wonderful : he seldom forgot what he once heard.

One of his class-mates was Raghunath : he was a brilliant student. He wrote a book on *nyaya*, logic. Nimai, too, wrote a book on *nyaya*. One day, both were in a ferry-boat, crossing the Ganges. Nimai showed his copy of the book on Logic to Raghunath. Raghunath read it. Raghunath became pale. Raghunath said :—"How superior is Nimai's book to the book I have written!"

Nimai heard these words : he felt a pinch in his heart. He must not harm another! Raghunath must have some relief. And Nimai flung his copy of the book on Logic into the river Ganges, and felt happy. The child is the father of man,—said a great English poet. Nimai as a boy showed what he was destined to be in the growing years of his manhood,—a healer of human hearts.

[6]

NIMAI was in his teens when he started his own school. He was well known and students flocked to him. Nimai,—Krishna's chosen one,—started his school in no costly building. Nimai's school was in a big empty cow-shed of a rich milkman. Nimai played with his students : he swam with them in the river.

One day, a learned Pundit came to Nadia, saying :—"I challenge everyone in scholarship. Let anyone come and have a discussion with me. He will fail! I have travelled to many parts. I have defeated all who confronted me. Come one! Come all! I challenge you!"

This man had the pride of a typical pundit. He went to

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Nimai and said to him :—"Pundit Nimai! I challenge you, too!"

Nimai said :—"How can I confront you? They call me here a teacher, a pundit, because they love me. But I am not really a pundit. I know nothing. I am your servant. I fain would be your student. I would serve you!"

"Nimai! sit down!" said the Pundit to him.

Then Nimai said to the Pundit :—"Sir! I and others here would hear your description of the Ganges flowing before us, if you will kindly describe in Sanskrit verse."

The Pundit, flushed with pride, described the flowing Ganges in verses.

Nimai listened to the description, quietly. When the Pundit had finished, Nimai quietly said :—"Sir! here are, I humbly submit, grammatical mistakes in the description of the flowing Ganges to which we have just listened."

The Pundit was honest enough to admit his defeat. The very next morning, he left Nadia, saying:—"Here, in Nadia, is a young man who knows more than I!"

Nimai grows in years and reputation. He is honoured as the greatest scholar of his day.

[7]

NIMAI goes on a pilgrimage to Gaya to pay offerings to the soul of his departed father. In the temple of Gaya, Nimai sees Vishnu's foot-prints and suddenly chants the Name of Krishna. Nimai becomes a *bhakta*. He forgets his books and learning. He remembers only Krishna.

Strange, mystical experiences overpowered Nimai. He fell into "fits," "trances." Nimai fell down unconscious, again and again. Krishna seized him. The Lord captured him. He woke up, crying, shouting:—"Krishna! Krishna!" He woke up and there were tears in his eyes. He woke up as one who had a "vision." Some called him mad! He ran

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here and there. He climbed up trees, and again he shouted:—"Krishna! Krishna!"

Nimai's new centre of consciousness suddenly opened. He became a *bhakta* of Sri Krishna. Krishna's face captivated his heart. To Nimai the world seemed to have become a zero. And for the first time, Nimai understood that spiritual life was, in essence, love and devotion,—*prema bhakti*. The rigid systems of Kapila and Gautama lost their appeal for him: and cold arguments of logic and philosophy he renounced forever.

He returned from Gaya with a sense of "loneliness" in him. This "loneliness" was "communion" with Krishna. The grace of God was on Nimai. The tincture of pride that was in him as a pundit was gone forever. He no longer thought of scholarship. In him there was but one longing,—to commune forever with Krishna. He cried, again and again:—"Withdraw not Thy Face from me, O Krishna!"

He was famed once for scholarship. His scholarship gave way to unconditional surrender: the *Gita* calls it *arpanam*. He no longer enjoyed arguments and discussions. His joy was in communion with Krishna. Nimai had a mind, keen and sharp,—a mind of gold. Now he placed it at the Feet of Krishna, saying:—"O Krishna! Krishna! this, too, is Thine! I am Thine, entirely Thine! Withdraw not Thy Face from me!"

[8]

NIMAI returns from Gaya a new man with a new vision of the work for him in life. Awake, he muses on Krishna: in *kirtan* he sings of Krishna. Asleep, he dreams of Krishna. The figure of the Lord shines before him in every activity of his by day, in every dream of his by night.

The mother Sachi, looks at Nimai,—and weeps! He does not comb his hair any longer. And he talks little. He has

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entered into deep silence. And at night, Nimai sleeps on the floor.

"Nimai! Nimai!" the mother says to him, and runs after him. He gives no answer. "O God!" she says. "O Krishna!" And she weeps only as a mother can weep.

In the evening *satsang* (fellowship meetings), Nimai is absorbed in the *kirtan* (singing the Name). How loudly he shouts:—"*Hari bol! Hari bol!*" Then as the mood grows on him, he stands up with uplifted arms, with eyes turned upwards: he dances while the people gaze and gaze at his illumined face. And again and again, he weeps and cries:—"Krishna! Krishna! do not hide Thy Face Divine from me!"

Nimai's mother goes through a period of agony. She recalls the fact that Vishvarupa, her elder son, had left her suddenly and became a *sanyasin*.

"What shall I do?" asks the mother in her perplexity. "Is my son become insane?"

A physician comes, examines Nimai, and says:—"Mother! I have no medicine for your son!"

A relative comes to visit Nimai and says to Sachi:—"Why do you weep, mother?"

"Look," she says, "Nimai has returned from Gaya and no longer attends to his household duties. Much of his time he spends in adoring Krishna. Nimai doesn't talk to anyone: he goes into silence, again and again. Nimai sleeps on the floor. Nimai eats very little. Nimai's whole face is changed. When he goes to school, too, he cries, again and again:—'Krishna! Krishna! Krishna!'

"I see Nimai shedding tears and crying:—'Where is Krishna? Where shall I find Him? The Blue One, the Beloved,—where is He?'

"I said to him:—'Nimai! what is the matter with you, my fair child? You no longer teach your students in the school.

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Nimai! you are well versed in the Scriptures. You are aware of the duties of a householder.'

"And my fair one said to me:—'Ma! I know not what is the matter with me, what is it that draws me on! I fain would cling to the shore, but I cannot! My soul wanders away. Helpless am I, Ma! I plunge, again and again, into the Infinite Sea, where I see my Beloved Krishna, and I fain would sport with Him all the time!' "

The mother continues:—"My eldest son, Vishvarupa, hath renounced the world. And my heart has ached ever since. My heart trembles with the thought that Nimai may follow in Vishvarupa's steps!"

[9]

NIMAI no longer spoke in arguments: he spoke in *kirtan* (song and dance). His *kirtan* thrilled multitudes of men and women who came to hear him, to see him, to gaze at the beauty of his face, to be blessed by him. His *kirtan* sprang from the new heart which was a gift to him from Krishna.

Nimai showed forth to many the beauty of Krishna whose roots were in the depths of the heart. The Hidden Krishna became manifest in this Man of Destiny. How men and women in long rows followed him! How even the crippled, the lepers, the sick, the deaf-mutes, the blind, followed him from day to day!

Not a few were the miracles the Master wrought with the power of love in his heart. Bengal was ruled, in those days, by a Muslim King. The Muslim Ruler did not enjoy much reputation of being a man of sympathy or statesmanship. Nadia was, in those days, practically under the domination of two influential officials,—Jagai and Madhai. They were rich, and they were "robbers." They robbed the people of their wealth: and they were drunkards. They were converted by Sri Chaitanya.

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The two great ministers of the Muslim King were Rupa and Sanatana. So great was the influence on them of the Muslim Ruler that Rupa and Sanatana, though born Hindus and good students of Sanskrit, denied their race and religion and consented to bear Muslim names and to live in daily life as children of Islam.

Under the influence of Sri Chaitanya, both Rupa and Sanatana changed the course of their lives. They became disciples of the Master. They lived a new life,—of simplicity, compassion and love. Becoming the disciples of Chaitanya, Sanatana and Rupa left their homes, in obedience to Chaitanya's word, in order to build a New Brindaban. Both these brothers were richly blessed, for they both lived and moved and had their being in *bhakti*, the spirit of Love Divine. Of their daily life I read in the *Chaitanya Charitamrita*:—

Often did Chaitanya's companions at Puri ask the pilgrims who returned from Brindaban:—

"Say, how are the two brothers, Sanatana and Rupa? And what is the mode of their lives?"

And the pilgrims said:—

"The two brothers seldom sleep under a roof but mostly under a tree.

"And each night they sleep under a new tree!

"They beg not more than a handful of meal, every day.

"Dry bread and uncooked grains they eat: and they never taste any delicious foods.

"The beggar's bowls are their only property and torn garments are their only raiments.

"And they speak of Krishna only,—take delight only in His thought and the words:—'Krishna! Krishna!'

"They sleep but an hour and fifty minutes, every night.

"And the rest of the day and night they spend in singing the glories of Krishna or in writing poems offered unto

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Krishna or in preparing papers which interpret Chaitanya's teaching of *bhakti*.

"And how delighted are they if anyone speaks of the Master!

"Of him they always think, and he is their inspiration and joy in their work!"

These simple words of Krishna's simple *bhaktas* have touched my eyes with tears and I exclaim :—"Verily, they and their Master, Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, moved in the glow of the Perfect Light where no darkness is forever and where only Peace abides,—the Peace that passeth understanding."

[10]

SURROUNDED by some of his devoted disciples, the Master stayed at Puri for over seventeen years. They read to him from the *Gita* and the *Bhagavata:* and they sang to him the songs he loved so well,—the songs, specially, of Radha's longing for the Lord.

Some of his disciples stayed with him even at night. The thought that Krishna did vanish, again and again, weighed upon his heart. Again and again, would the Master get up in the dark of the night and lament the absence of the Lord. Again and again, he would sing the song of which the one note was:—"Krishna! O Krishna! Where art Thou? Where?"

Sri Chaitanya sang: he talked to himself: he cried the cry of loud lamentation: he sighed again and again. And on several nights he moved out of his room in sleep. His *bhaktas* (disciples) brought him back. They heard his moving words, —he uttered them again and again:— "Krishna! O Krishna! Where art Thou? Where?"

One of the Master's devoted disciples was Swarupa. He was a good singer. Chaitanya loved Swarupa specially

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for his songs of Radha. Swarupa often sang them at night. Another devoted to Mahaprabhu Sri Chaitanya was Ramanand Roy. He spent his nights, again and again, in Sri Chaitanya's house and sang to the Master the songs of *gopis* (milk-maids devoted to Krishna), filled with longing for the Lord.

Chaitanya often went into his inner room. It was meant to give the Master the silence for which his soul had a longing. But often, when Sri Chaitanya entered into his inner room to commune with Krishna, Swarupa was at the door of Sri Chaitanya's room. Blessed was Swarupa. He slept not, but the whole night he thought of his Master and kept watch over his movements.

Sitting in his inner room, Chaitanya would often sing. Sometimes, the song would die out: Swarupa would hear no sound. Then he said to himself:—"Perhaps, the Master has moved out of his room,—has gone somewhere." Swarupa, then, would gently open the door. "There is no one in the room," he would say. Swarupa would go out in search of the missing Master. Again and again, would Swarupa and fellow-disciples find Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu at the gate of the Temple of Jagannath. His heart was in Krishna's Image in the Temple. And in the darkness of the night, Chaitanya would often sit before the Image,—would sit and gaze and gaze at the beauty of Krishna's Lotus-face, would gaze and fall down unconscious.

One day, Swarupa, going in search of Sri Chaitanya, finds him at the Jagannath Temple. The Master is unconscious. Then Swarupa gently draws near to Sri Chaitanya and, in his ear, he utters quietly the word:—"Krishna! Krishna! Krishna!" And Chaitanya recovers his consciousness! Chaitanya gets up with the words on his lips:—"*Hari bol! Hari bol! Hari bol, bhai!*"

Some other day, Swarupa and other disciples, who slept

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near Sri Chaitanya with a view to keep watch over his movements, raised the cry :—"Where is the Master?" Sri Chaitanya was not found in his room. The disciples went out in search of Mahaprabhu. This time they did *not* find him at the Temple of Jagannath. Chaitanya had moved on much further. Swarupa found his beloved Master on the top of a hill. There, on the hill-top, the Master was found lying down on the ground, uttering, again and again, the single, sacred word :—"Krishna! Krishna! Krishna!"

On another night, too, Sri Chaitanya vanished. His disciples searched for him the whole night : they found him not. The next morning, too, they were in quest of their Beloved. They found him not. A fisherman suddenly came and reported :—"I have found the Holy Body on the seashore!" Chaitanya had evidently gazed at the blue beauty of the sea, had gazed and gazed and plunged into the waters to commune with his Beloved, Krishna. Chaitanya's body lay "unconscious" for several hours : and the Master was brought back to his room in the Jagannath Temple.

How did Sri Chaitanya pass away? Who knows? Some of his dearest disciples say that the Master disappeared all of a sudden. Some say he breathed his last breath at the foot of the Image of Krishna in the Temple. Some believe the Master disappeared in the Image in the Temple.

Some others give a different version of the passing away of Sri Chaitanya. He was doing *kirtan* : absorbed in the song of the *kirtan*, the Master danced and danced until he fell down and wounded his foot. The wound became septic, fever set in and, in three or four days, the Master passed away.

According to another version, Sri Chaitanya gazing at the blue waters of the sea, had a vision of Beloved Krishna. Then Chaitanya went into the waters to embrace his Lord and commune with Him : and Chaitanya disappeared

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in the sea. They brought his body to the Temple. There are some who believe that Chaitanya's body was buried with due rites, in the Temple : Chaitanya's *samadhi* (memorial enshrining ashes) was built in the Temple of Jagannath.

Whatever the circumstances under which he passed away, one thing is true. He was young, only forty-eight years of age, when he passed away. But in the few years permitted him to show forth the beauty of Krishna's life and Krishna's message, Chaitanya's influence had spread far and wide in Bengal, in Orissa, in the Deccan and in Maharashtra.

His disciples tell us that the Master never died. He went into the sea and in the depths met his Master, Krishna. In the face of Sri Chaitanya many of his devoted followers saw the Face of Krishna Himself. Today, Sri Chaitanya is become a centre of the devotion, the *bhakti*, the life, the dedicated activities of millions of men and women. This man, Chaitanya, born in a poor family, is become the Master of millions. Above the voice of the rulers and pundits of his day, above the influences of scholars and philosophers of Nadia, works today the spirit of this one Man Divine, and shapes the lives of thousands of Indian homes.

To his disciples, he is a Living Presence. It may be felt in the ardour, the enthusiasm, the longing, the love of his devoted ones. They tell us that his life and work have not ended. They believe that the Master works in the hearts of those who believe in him and still may listen to his living voice.

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SRI RAMAKRISHNA : A CHILD OF THE ETERNAL

THE mystic beauty of Sri Ramakrishna's life attracted me in the days of my youth, many years ago, "The first love hath no end," says Chandidas. And my love and reverence for Ramakrishna have grown as the years have gone by.

The story of Sri Ramakrishna is really a story of inner life. His adventures were in the inner realm of the Spirit. His heroism was in that self-conquest which, Muhammad says, is more than many a martyrdom. So much of our energy is, in these days, spent for organisations. Ramakrishna poured his energy into self-realisation.

Our institutions and organisations,—the biggest of them,—serve a useful but, I humbly submit, a temporary purpose. The life of this man of realisation, this messenger from a mystic realm of the Spirit has, I believe, an abiding value. For in his life, as in the lives of prophets and saints, hath shone the Light Eternal. A spiritual genius, Ramakrishna was a union of the mystic, prophet, and saint. In the story of this inner Ramakrishna is the alluring power of his life.

I think of him as a symbol of that true India which stands for supremacy of the *Atman*, as the West of today stands for supremacy of an intensely individualised intelligence. In him I see the face of hidden India. In him I see a radiance of the self-revealing God. Organisation attracts attention in these days,—too much attention! We need the inspiration of great lives, of illuminated souls. Untrained in school learning, Ramakrishna received training in the school of the Spirit, and became a sage, a God-intoxicated man. "Have you seen God?" Vivekananda asked him. "Yes," said Ramakrishna; "I see God as I see you, only more intensely!"

Simple, transparent, he had not the egoism of the so-called

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"great." In his heart was the tenderness of a child. "As potato or brinjal, when boiled, becomes tender," he said, "so a man becomes tender when he attains to perfection; he loses all egoism." Am I wrong in saying the perfect man is the perfect child? "Of such," said Jesus, "is the Kingdom of Heaven." It is the Kingdom of the little ones. A little before Ramakrishna passed away he began, like a child, to play with flowers. "The child-mood," he said, "is upon me; I behold the Lord within and without."

A German theologian, Ruemmer, rightly urged that the great secret of the saints was humility. It was the secret of Ramakrishna. He spoke of his "simplicity and illiteracy." His "illiteracy" made all the more transparent his illuminated heart. His simplicity was the simplicity of St. Francis.

"Blessed are the poor in spirit,"—said Jesus. And again :—"Blessed are the pure in heart." Sri Ramakrishna belonged to the blessed rank of the poor and the pure. He was a picture of humility and love, and he had such a horror of honours, riches, and what the world calls "greatness." Today, princes and professors deem it an honour to pay homage to this son of a poor villager, this simple servant of God and man.

How wonderfully well he assimilated the spirit of the saints! He drew into himself the Breath Divine of Krishna and Christ, and of all the prophets and saints. He fled from the shadow of any desire for prominence. He had no desire to shine before men. Like Krishna, like Jesus, Ramakrishna loved the little ones,—loved children, and blessed them. Like St. Francis, Ramakrishna communed with birds and nature. He had the non-attachment of a child, the sweet unconsciousness of a child, the utter unconventionality of a child. Gazing at the beauty of his child-like face, I have said to myself, again and again :—"In his life hath shone anew the Light Eternal!"

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And in his heart was such tender love for the poor! He would eat of the leavings of beggars in the temple. He would sweep, as a scavenger, the dirtiest place. One day, he was travelling with a rich disciple, Mathura Babu, to Varanasi. On the way, they halted for a day in a village. Ramakrishna saw the poor people there. His heart was filled with sadness.

Ramakrishna said to his disciple :—"You are a steward of the Mother. Feed these poor people today and give a piece of cloth to every one!"

The disciple calculated and hesitated. It would cost so much!

Ramakrishna wept and said :—"I must not go to Varanasi. Let me stay with the poor here."

He went and sat among them. The disciple was moved. He fed the poor. He ordered out cloth for them. Then he and Ramakrishna resumed their journey to Varanasi!

OVER a century ago was born the blessed one. He was born in a village named Kamarpukar. He reached heights of holiness. And the villager Gadadhar is become the Ramakrishna to whom the world pays homage, today.

Read the "sayings" of Sri Ramakrishna! How rich in the wisdom of the Spirit! Here are a few of these "sayings," precious to me as pearls of great price :—

**He is no scholar whose mind is not true to God. Be illumined!

**Do you see what I see? He, the Lord, has become everything.

**Earnestness is the only thing necessary. Long must you struggle in the water before you learn to swim.

**In the pure is reflected the Lord as the sun in a clear mirror.

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**God shines when the ego dies.

**Like unto a miser that longeth for gold, let thy heart long for the Lord!

**Call on the Divine Mother! She will come to you and take you up in Her arms!

Sri Ramakrishna discouraged sectarianism. It is the negation of the true spirit of religion. "Be not like the frog in the well," he said. He had respect for all religions. He saw the unity of Allah, Rama and Rahim. He respected the *Qur'an* and the *nimaz*. He meditated on the Madonna and Christ. He bowed his head at the name of Jesus, calling him "the master-*yogi* in eternal union with the Godhead."

When I gaze at the picture of this God-intoxicated man of the 19th century, I see the vision and promise of a New Age. I behold the breaking down of barriers between religions and races. I see the unresting march of India to a new life of simplicity and spiritual achievement.

The greatest need of modern civilisation is simplicity. So much of our life is a dance of trivialities and superficialities, of pleasures and sensations,—a dance of death. The child-like spirit is absent. Calculation-consciousness is growing. The disease of being "prominent" and "great" is spreading. The creed of ambition is popular with the nation's youth. Therefore I plead with them for a new study of the life and message of Ramakrishna.

Standing, one day, on the roof of the Dakshineshwar Temple, as the bells rang and the conch-shells sounded for evening worship, Ramakrishna in the strength of his simplicity cried at the top of his voice :—"Where are you, my boys? Come unto me! O ye that are young, I cannot bear to live without you." In that voice was the anguish of a holy heart. Is the voice stilled? It rings, I know, in

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some hearts. May it ring in a million hearts! And may there be some who may so aspire and so live today that, in the years of their manhood, they may, Vivekananda-like, take Ramakrishna's message to the nations!

The days are darkening. India is in agony. An eminent man spoke some time ago of the "bankruptcy of science." Many there be today who feel sad at the bankruptcy of civilisation. The world's greatest need is, God-consciousness. India, the first-born of the nations, India has for ages taught the truth that the soul of civilisation is God. To this ancient message of India, Ramakrishna calls you, young men!

"Come unto me," he says, "I cannot bear to live without you." How many will hearken to the message? How many will take it into politics and into the life of the nation? One thing I know. The problems of today will not be solved without the light of the Ancient Wisdom that sees in all religions the One Eternal Self, and in all nations the One Spirit of Divine Humanity.

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THE GREAT-SOULED GANDHI

When seventeen years ago, on that fateful thirtieth day of January 1948, the news travelled to me in Sind that the great-souled Gandhi, the Beloved of Bharata and the Beloved of many of my friends in Pakistan, had passed on, I said to myself :—"Be still, my heart! Be still and listen!" I listened. The very space had become vocal. It said to me :—"There is no death to him who dedicates his life to the Life Divine?" Death doth not touch Gandhi, for he gave his heart to God. Gandhi served India and clung in faith and reverence to the Lord of Love.

Moniya,—so they called him when he was a boy. One day, he was beaten by some boys in the compound of a temple near his house. He complained to his mother. She said to him :—"Why didn't you hit back?" He said :—"Mother! how can you ask me to hit back? Am I not their brother?"

A brother is a burden-bearer. And Gandhi bore the burden of millions. In one of his books, he says :—"I would rather be torn to pieces than disown my brothers and sisters in suffering and pain!" He identified himself with the poor and needy,—the broken ones, the neglected ones, the indentured labourers, the untouchables,—with all those whom the world, intoxicated with power, tramples upon everyday.

Gandhi was a champion of the poor against oppression, injustice and insolence of might and power. Years before he became a teacher and a healer of men in India, he taught in South Africa that to live was to give,—and share with the poor. Not in vanity and self-love but in sympathy and fellowship did Gandhi serve and suffer for the forsaken

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and forlorn.

In the days of his youth he read Thoreau and Emerson, Mazzini and Ruskin, the *Ramayana* and the *Upanishads* : and he began to realise the meaning of education. "Education," Gandhi wrote, "does not mean a knowledge of letters; education means character-building." The secret of character-building, he saw, was in the three qualities of (1) duty; (2) service; and (3) love of truth. And he who truly loved truth, he said, was humble. This thought grew upon him when, in later years, he began to study the *Gita*. He realised that there were many roads to Truth, many ways of approach to the Mystery : and he grew in love and reverence for Rama and Krishna, Buddha and Jesus, Mahavira and Muhammad, Nanak and Kabir, St. Francis and Tolstoy. And he learnt to regard Humanity as one Family.

I know not how many there be in our crowded cities who truly remember Gandhi today. I know that outside India,—in Europe and America,—there are groups of earnest men and women to whom Gandhi is a star to guide them on the path of a new life, a new civilisation.

To the spiritual family of Buddha and Nanak and St. Francis belonged Mahatma Gandhi. Gandhi appeared at a time which was a very critical one in the history of India. He came when India seemed to be falling into an abyss,—the abyss of a violent revolution. The emphasis of the revolution Gandhi worked for was on sympathy and humanity, on service and fellowship with the poor.

Like Spengler in Germany, Gandhi realised that the industrial revolution was the cause of the decay of the West. Gandhi urged that a free India must save herself from the tragedy of industrial revolution. Industrialisation means capitalism. Capitalism means much wealth and much

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violence and so becomes the cause of wars. Gandhi pleaded for renewal of the village and village industries. Democracy, he said, was not the rule of money but simple life and true *swaraj* was service of the poor.

In his heart burned a flame. How many sleepless hours did he not spend thinking of the deep tragedy of India! The tragedy of the nation, once mighty, now in poverty, entered as an iron in his soul. There was sadness in his beautiful smile.

As he went from place to place preaching his gospel, I thought of the man with a lantern, in the story. The man went, from place to place, lighting up dark corners and saying to everyone :—"Where art thou?" And as they heard his voice, one by one, they answered :—"I am here!" And one by one, they rose to follow the Light. As Mahatma Gandhi moved, from place to place, many awoke from their ease and indifference and followed the Light. With a frail body but with truth and love in his heart, Gandhi went from place to place to spread the message.

I salute Gandhi as a servant of the poor, as a brother of the poor, as a lover of the poor, as a devotee of the poor, ah! as a worshipper of the poor. The key-note of his wonderful life,—a life of heroic deeds, of heroic achievements, of heroic aspirations, of heroic attainments,—the secret of his life is his spirit of *seva*, the spirit of service and sacrifice.

A few of us were with Gandhi as he walked, one day, along the bridge which leads from Rohri to Sukkur, in Sind. In answer to the question :—"What is the easiest way to God?" Gandhi said :—"To me *seva*,—service of the poor,—opens the easiest way to God."

When, in 1932, Gandhi went to London, he preferred to live in the East End of London,—a quarter of the poor folk.

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They had free access to him, and children became his friends in his morning walks. He left behind, where he stayed, a spinning wheel and one of his sandals. A poor Londoner, seeing these two simple things of Gandhi, said :— "O, we all liked Gandhi. He got along famous with us people here. Some folks couldn't understand what he meant when he talked about praying and giving up things to the poor. We could understand him, and we loved him!"

MAHATMA Gandhi was a *bhakta* of the *Gita*. He did not exaggerate, I feel sure, when he referred to the *Gita* as his "Mother." Much he owed to the *Gita*,—much more than many seem to be aware of. In his weekly journal, "Young India," Mahatma Gandhi wrote :—

> When disappointment stares me in the face, and all around I see not one ray of light, I go back to the *Bhagavad Gita*. I find a verse here and a verse there and I invariably begin to smile in the midst of overwhelming tragedies,—and my life has been full of external tragedies,—and if they have left no visible, no indelible sear on me, I owe it all to the teaching of the *Bhagavad Gita*.

Who loved India more than Gandhi? But Gandhi kept clear of narrow nation-cults which obscure the vision of the unity of Humanity. The nationalisms of the West suffer from nation-idolatry. Gandhi loved the poem written by an Englishman, who was at once a scholar and a saint :—"Lead, kindly Light!" And Gandhi I call a man of Light. Gandhi led his countrymen through darkness to light. I saw reflected in his face and his words the light of service to the poor, the light of friendship with the lowly and the lost, with the broken ones of India and humanity.

I do not regard Gandhi as essentially a politician. And to me the problem of India is not merely political. There

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is a biology of the nation. This must be studied and its laws. No life without creative *shakti*. Until this is released, India may not hope to achieve her real freedom. The new *shakti* which India needs will be developed in the measure in which we enter into disinterested fellowship with the poor. Hence the significance of Gandhi and his message.

He is not merely a nationalist. He is a *bhakta* of the *Gita*,—a *bhakta* of the great Revealers of the human race,—of Rama and Krishna, of Tulsi and Tuka, of Buddha and Jesus. "My patriotism," Gandhi said, "includes the good of mankind in general. Isolated independence is *not* the goal : it is voluntary interdependence. The better mind of the world desires, today, not absolutely independent states warring one against another, but a federation of freely, interdependent states. I see nothing impossible about our expressing our readiness for universal interdependence rather than independence."

WHERE among India's distinguished patriots is there, today, one disciple of Gandhi, inspired by his love of the *rishis* and saints, his reverence for the village-folk, his readiness not to "patronise" the "untouchables" but to share their "dirty work" and so to bless them and be blessed? And is there one in our midst, today, who would find his greatest joy in sitting at the feet of children and gazing at their wonder-filled eyes, exclaim as did Krishna and Jesus in the long ago :—"Of such is the Kingdom of Heaven?" How many among India's great ones, today, would say with Mahatma Gandhi :—"All religions are true! And all religions are almost as dear to me as my own Hinduism"?

It seems to me that Gandhi is a Voice of God to the modern world. Say not Gandhi is dead! Gandhi is a Voice of God unto the nations of the world. And this morning, methinks, I heard Gandhi say to me :—"Brothers

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are ye all!"

Hindus and Muslims, Parsis and Christians, Jains and Buddhists,—brothers are you all! Hindustan and Pakistan, brothers are ye both! Brothers are ye! All the races of the earth are brothers. All the religions of the world are brothers. And these hands are given you to help, not to butcher. These hearts are given you to love, not to hate. Brain and science and machinery and civilisation and all your technical equipment are given you for the service of the poor and needy, the lowly and the lost, for the service of our broken, bewildered humanity.

AMONG the pictures drawn from the lives of the truly great ones of humanity, there be three on which my thoughts have rested, from time to time, in the chaos and conflict of these days. One is the picture of Krishna wiping the tears of an outcast woman, saying to her :—"Weep not, my child! I am with thee." The second is the picture of Jesus on the Cross, crying :—"*Eloi! Eloi!*" "My God! My God!" The third is the picture of Gandhi struck by the bullets of an Indian brother and, while falling backward, mortally hurt, quietly praying the mystic word of the ancient *rishi* :—"*He Rama! He Rama!*" "O Rama! O Rama!"

These pictures have, again and again, touched mine eyes with tears. And as my aching eyes behold the tragedy of the East and the tragedy of the West, I exclaim :—"Beloved Gandhi! India hath need of thee! And the world hath need of thee!"

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PARUSHAH

BORN in 1820, he passed away in 1899, on the Basant Panchami day, at 4 A. M. His admirers talk of his "miracles." He was, I believe, a psychic. But to me the main "miracle" is that of the Divine Grace which transformed his life at an early age. More than all the stories of his "miracles" is the standing miracle of his life.

He had a small post in the Sind Police Department. One day, he had much work to do. He returned home at 9 P. M. He was very tired. He had not found time to take meals. He was putting off his office uniform, when he was called to report himself at once to his sahib. He said to himself :—"I have served the sircar from morn to night. I have not found time even for meals. Enough of this servitude! I must enter now the service of the King of kings."

Tears stood in his eyes : *vairagya* set in! His life was suddenly transformed. He obeyed the order of his sahib and reported himself after 9 P. M., but with a resolve to serve the sircar no longer. He placed his office dress and the sword at the feet of his sahib, saying :—"Sir ! I have now made up my mind to be a servant of the King of kings." The sahib was, doubtless, dumbfounded!

Parushah was a young man, then. And he had married a young girl. He resolved to go in quest. He reminds me, in this regard, of Sri Ramakrishna. Like the saint of Dakshineshwar, this Sindhi saint, also, remained, in *grahstha*, a life-long *brahmachari*. His wife's name was Ganga He called her "mother!" "Mata Ganga!" "Mother Ganga!"

He went to meditate on the mountains. There he spent twenty years in *tapasya*, in self-discipline, in *yoga*. The world will never know of this important period in his spiritual

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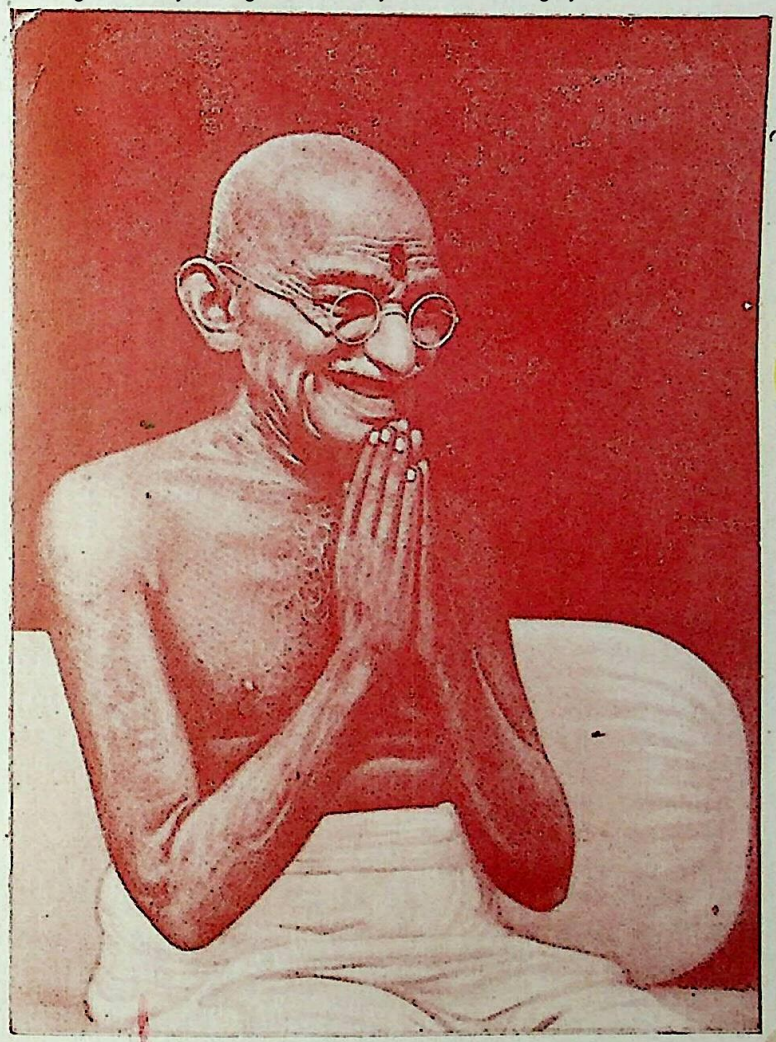

MAHATMA GANDHI

Confession of error is like a broom that sweeps away dirt and leaves the surface cleaner than before.

—Mahatma Gandhi

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Swami
Vivekananda

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evolution. He seldom spoke of his hidden life. Doubtless the twenty years from 1850 to 1870 were years of communion with the mountains and the desert, of meditation on the Infinite Mystery, of *yogic sadhanas*, of secret fellowship with the Hidden God.

In 1870, he returned to Rohri (Sind). He lived quietly in a little cottage on the river bank. "What did he do?" young men ask. He opened no school. He organised no institution. And in these days of over-emphasis on the "outer," in these days when, in the name of "activity," "work," we have neglected the highest of activities, namely the cultivation of inner life,—in these days young men ask:—"But what did he do?" And I have wished to answer the question :—" Is not *being* better than *doing?*"

It seems to me what the world needs today more urgently than anything else is the message of saints. It is the Ancient Message :—"Live in the Spirit!" To live in the Spirit is not to be idle but to be tremendously active. Our mistake is that we confound activity with distraction and work with noise. What greater work than this, to build life in God? And life in God spontaneously expresses itself in service. For love is not idle but dynamic.

The saint of whom I speak was a builder of what is infinitely better than institutions and organisations. He was a builder of lives. His own life he built with the power of prayer and *tapasya*. And returning after twenty years of meditation on the mountains, he became a centre of inspiration to many. He built the lives of not a few. One of his disciples, Vasanram, became a *bhakta*.

Parushah influenced the lives at once of Hindus and Muslims. Men of different creeds loved him and revered him : in his heart was love for all. It was a Muslim mystic and poet, Bedil by name, who gave the saint the Muslim title, "Shah" (king). He was a "king" amongst men. Hindus

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and Muslims vied with one another to do him honour. This *yogi* awakened the Eternal in several hearts. Is there a nobler work? This *brahmachari* bore witness to the power of prayer. Inexpressibly dear to him was the Name of God. Not a few, today, are curious about psychic powers and *hatha yoga* practices. We need to be reminded of the power of *Sabda Yoga*,—the power of the Name (*Hari-Nama*). Its purifying influence is needed urgently in these days of sensationalism and excitement.

Disciples of the saint dwell on the "miraculous" in his life. I love to think of the saint's simple humanity. Is there a "miracle" mightier than noble living?

He shunned the glare and glitter of life. He was a lover of the Hidden Life. He shrank from everything which savoured of show. When some disciples brought him silken clothes to wear, he cast them aside. Simple clothes he wore : simple food he ate : and in a quiet, simple way, he served the poor, cooking food for them and giving them clothes to wear. It was a life truly great, a life truly rich in simplicity, prayer and service, a life wonderfully rich in love. And his message to us all in these days of dissociation and discord is the ancient message :—"Brothers! love one another!"

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P. H. RAMCHANDANI

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BOOK REVIEWS

By the Editor

BUDDHA AND THE GOSPEL OF BUDDHISM by Ananda Coomaraswamy. [University Books, Inc., 1601 Jericho Turnpike, New Hyde Park, New York] : $10·00

The gospel of the Buddha has fascinated men and women in different countries and at different times. And the teaching of this great one, who blessed the sacred soil of India, twenty-five centuries ago, has a message for the modern mind. This message has a special value for the youths of India. And if India is to make her contributions to the modern movement of culture and civilisation, her youths must study anew the teachings of Sri Krishna and the Buddha, the seers and sages, the saints and prophets, who have appeared in this ancient land, age after age. Buddhism is only a part,—an aspect,—of India's hoary culture. As Ananda Coomaraswamy puts it, Buddhism is a harmonious product of Hinduism.

The book under review is a much-needed reprint of the 1927 edition of this great book published in England. Dr. Coomaraswamy has passed away : but his illuminated interpretation of Indian thought and culture, philosophy and art, lives on, and will continue to inspire generations unborn.

In the first part of the book is given the moving life of the Buddha. The second part deals with the gospel of early Buddhism. The third part describes the contemporary systems. The fourth part gives a stirring account of the Mahayana. And the last part is an interpretation of Buddhist art.

The book is rich in scholarship and sympathy, insight and intuition.

HOLY MOTHER by Swami Nikhilananda. [George Allen & Unwin Ltd., London] : 32 s.

To thousands upon thousands of the devotees and disciples of Sri Ramakrishna scattered all over the world, Sri Sarada Devi is the Holy Mother. In her life was radiant the light of God. And she became a channel through which flowed

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the grace of the Master to many,—not a few of whom were thieves and drunkards, sinners and criminals who had strayed from the path of righteousness. Compassion flowed out of her heart in an endless stream.

Swami Nikhilananda had the privilege of coming in contact with this humble little woman of God who, he says, "was a teacher par excellence. In her relationship with her disciples, she acted as mother, teacher, Divinity incarnate." And in this well-written, authentic and inspiring biography of the Holy Mother, the gifted author has included some personal reminiscences.

Written by a man of vision and wisdom, of meditation and dedication, the book is of inestimable value to all pilgrims on the Path.

KULARNAVA TANTRA annotated translation by M. P. Pandit, with an introduction by Sir John Woodroffe. [Ganesh & Co., Madras] : Rs. 25/-

The Tantric sadhana has been more traduced than understood. Nevertheless, it is a rich storehouse of deep spiritual wisdom. It must not be forgotten that the Tantric sadhana is not meant for the ordinary man, the beginner on the path, the soul struggling for light. The Tantric sadhana is meant for the truly developed and mature soul, who has put on the human body to continue intensively, or to complete, his inner unfoldment. It is meant for the man who has already built up strong foundations of moral, ethical and spiritual life.

The Kularnava Tantra is one of the most important treatises of Tantric literature, giving specific instructions in regard to Sakti worship. The Tantra is full of passages of penetrating beauty. To quote but one :—"Prosperity is like a dream, youth is like a flower. Life is seen and is then gone like lightning. How can any one who knows this remain content?" Yes,—man must not remain content until he has realised his identity with Him who is the One-in-all, the All-in-one. And to all who have ears to hear and eyes to see, the Kularnava Tantra points the path that leads to the goal of self-realisation.

The book also contains the original Sanskrit text edited by Pandit Taranath Vidyaratna.

The Publishers deserve congratulations for having brought to light a long-forgotten but valuable book dealing with practical problems of self-culture.

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